The Christian Religion

ITS ORIGIN AND PROGRESS

Volume I

THE RISE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Part II

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THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION
ITS ORIGIN AND PROGRESS

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I
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Part II
THE
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GENERAL PREFACE

THE idea of this series of books originated with the Rev. P. Gardner-Smith, Fellow and Dean of Jesus College, Cambridge, who thought that many teachers of boys and girls would welcome a series of little books which severally might provide a term's work for their pupils, and taken all together, in sequence, supply them with the kind of knowledge of the Christian Religion and the Christian Church in the past that would explain to them the state of things by which they are confronted today.

We enlisted the help of Professor J. M. Creed and the Rev. J. W. Hunkin (now Archdeacon of Coventry), and the four of us together drafted the scheme and the syllabus of the different parts of it as a guide to the various writers, and have read each part. Each writer's treatment of the subject, of course, is his own, and some have not kept to the original scheme quite as closely as others have. But if we cannot hope that each part of the series will be found the most suitable book on its subject for use in Schools, we are confident that any one who reads through the three volumes will have acquired a true perspective of the whole subject and be able to form a sound judgement of the right and the wrong of many questions in dispute today. We hope, indeed, that what we have provided may be found of

interest and value to many who have left their school years far behind them.

Even among those who profess and call themselves Christians and are members of Christian Churches there is widespread uncertainty and doubt as to much that has been believed in the past and been reckoned a necessary part of the faith of a Christian, and again as to the possibility of carrying on life in the world as it is without being false to the ideals of Jesus at every turn. Yet the appeal that those ideals make comes as strongly as ever to men and women of all kinds everywhere today, and more of them than ever before are convinced that the solution of our present problems—individual and social, economic and international—is only to be found on lines that run parallel at least with the idealism of Jesus—love of GOD and love of Man.

Is Christianity a failure? Is it a case of "the high that proved too high?" and though it has claimed men's allegiance for nineteen hundred years, can it do so still? Is it still capable of being a guide to the right attitude to the world in which we find ourselves, the right way of thinking and feeling and living?

Everyone early in life ought to face these questions. But they cannot be answered by anyone who does not know what Christianity has been, how it came into being, what it had to contend with, and what it has achieved in the past.

This series of books is intended to supply sufficient knowledge of these things to suggest a reasonable answer.

The first volume gives a picture of the new society of Christians already in being, with its beliefs and its way of life, twenty or thirty years after it came into existence:— as soon, that is, as we have detailed evidence about it. To that is prefixed an account of the religious history of the Hebrew people among whom the new religion had its origin; and it is followed by a survey of the traditions about the personality and life and teaching of its Founder which were current in the society He brought into being in the early years of its existence, and since at least the middle of the second century have been regarded as inspired accounts of the actual facts.

The second volume will shew how the new religion made its way in the old world and overcame its rivals; and then will trace its history in the West and particularly in England, giving attention especially to such institutions and movements as have proved to be of lasting influence.

In the third volume the attempt is made to set out in its main features the faith of the Church in comparison with some of its rivals of today; to sketch the history of its worship with special reference to the English Book of Common Prayer; and finally to answer the question What is the Church's task in the world today?

The writers of these books are not among those who

think that *apologia* for Christianity is needed. Its chequered history shews great ideas and ideals fighting their way to a victory that has never yet been won, except for moments and by individuals. Always new conditions and new knowledge are setting would-be Christians new problems to solve. Christianity survives in the world because it has always been able to adapt itself to different conditions of knowledge and thought and life, assimilating much that was new and transfiguring it in turn. It is still a fighting Faith and a fighting Church, making converts all over the world, with which we have to deal. But it is to a quiet survey of its origins, its characteristics, and its history that readers of these volumes are invited.

J. F. BETHUNE-BAKER

Cambridge
23 *August* 1929

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THE letters of St Paul bring us into contact with groups of people scattered over the eastern part of the Roman Empire about the middle of the first century of our era. We are shewn something of their ideas and customs. Here they are, living men and women, thinking and doing; united in a great fellowship, conscious of a great experience. Who are they? What does it all mean?

The purpose of the following chapters is to take the Church in being as we can learn about it from the New Testament: to study it as it is actually presented to us, and to find out something about its origin and developement.

Our main source consists of a few letters written by St Paul at short intervals, certainly within the period A.D. 45–65. For later developements which took place in thought and practice after St Paul's death we have the documents contained in the rest of the New Testament; most of them difficult to date exactly, but undoubtedly giving us some of the main ideas entertained by the Christians about their religion at the end of the first century A.D. For a picture of the Christians in Palestine in the earliest days before the conversion of St Paul we have partly to work back from the Apostle's letters and partly to examine the primitive tradition so far as it is contained in the early chapters of Acts. It is convenient to start with the latter.

Thus our plan will be as follows: we begin with a study of the pre-Pauline Church; the experience of the first disciples and their theology and the beginnings of Christianity as a movement. Here we are chiefly concerned with Acts i–xi, 18 (Chapters I–III). Then, after a rapid survey (Chapter IV) of the general conditions in the Gentile world, we come to the teaching of St Paul. The main points of this teaching are considered in Chapters V and VI. Chapter VII deals with the effect of such preaching in the expansion of the Church in the Gentile world. The next chapter (VIII) shews how the Christians settled down after their first excitements, and is followed, in Chapter IX, by a picture of their daily life. Finally in Chapter X an attempt is made to give a brief account of the philosophical interpretation of itself, which, towards the end of the New Testament period, Christianity began to give to the educated world.

THE EARLIEST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

By

J. W. HUNKIN

CHAPTER ONE

THE EXPERIENCE OF THE FIRST DISCIPLES

IN spite of the death of their Master in the most shocking and distressing circumstances the little band of disciples soon rallied in a very surprising manner, and from the book of Acts and from the Epistles of St Paul we may gather how it was.

It is the former, dating in all probability from the last quarter of the first century A.D., which gives us the only continuous history of the rise and growth of the Christian movement. And even that is a mere sketch; and, particularly at the beginning, its evidence, at that point admittedly not first-hand, is meagre and difficult to interpret.

The Epistles of St Paul help us to eke it out a little. These Epistles are letters, real letters written to the Apostle's friends, often in answer to special inquiries, and generally upon ethical and theological subjects. Still they contain many allusions to historical situations, and on several important points they are our earliest and best authority.

We should have expected that when the disciples saw that Jesus was really dead, that no interposition of GOD had intervened, and that He who they hoped should have redeemed Israel (Lk. xxiv, 21) had actually been crucified as a criminal by order of the Roman governor, they would have scattered and gone back to their homes. They were mostly men from Galilee and they would naturally have returned thither to their old occupations. Perhaps some

did so. Others, however, remained, their common distress itself tending to keep them together.

There seems to have been a room in Jerusalem more or less at their disposal. Here they met and prayed: sadly, no doubt; hoping, possibly, against hope; but, as we should have expected, and as the Gospel records actually represent them, bewildered, downcast, frightened, almost in despair.

The next forty days are passed over by the author of Acts in a single chapter. He says that Jesus appeared from time to time and gave many proofs that after His Passion He was still alive (Acts i, 3). According to this author, who is also the author of the third Gospel, these appearances took place in or near Jerusalem. St Mark, whose Gospel is the earliest we have, evidently thought of them as occurring in Galilee. That, at all events, is where the disciples are told to expect to see Jesus (Mk. xiv, 28, xvi, 7; cf. Lk. xxiv, 6). But the narrative as we have it ends abruptly, and no further account is given. The Gospel which bears the name of St Matthew follows St Mark's last chapters very closely, but adds little here except the statement that Jesus did actually appear to the disciples on the mountain where He had appointed and 'when they saw him, they worshipped him, but some doubted' (Mt. xxviii, 17).

For our present purpose, however, it is not necessary to probe further into either of these two early traditions, the Lucan tradition of appearances in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, or the Marcan tradition of appearances in Galilee;[1] or even to examine the list of appearances given

[1] Cf. also Jn. xxi, 1–23.

by St Paul in 1 Cor. xv; which is, in fact, the earliest written record which has come down to us, and dates from about A.D. 55.

All such appearances are at the best difficult to visualize, and on any shewing they soon ceased. Nothing essential for our understanding of early Christianity depends upon our interpretation of the details contained in any of the accounts of them.

What the subsequent history shews to be far more important is the undeniable fact that the disciples became convinced, and especially from time to time as they met together, that Jesus Himself was present with them. Where two or three were gathered together in His name, there He was in the midst of them (Mt. xviii, 20): and particularly in the fellowship of the common meal, 'he was known of them in the breaking of the bread' (Lk. xxiv, 35).

It is worth while tracing carefully the use in the New Testament of this phrase 'the breaking of the bread'. The actual noun 'breaking' occurs only in the Lucan writings: once in Acts (ii, 42, 46)[1] and once in the Gospel (xxiv, 35). From this latter passage we gather that Jesus had a characteristic way of 'breaking the bread', i.e. of dividing and distributing[2] the flat loaves (leathery but very pleasant to eat, and still the staple article of food in such countries as Palestine and Egypt). This further suggests that meals

[1] The verb 'break' is found with 'the bread' in Acts xx, 7, 11: at Troas upon the first day of the week the disciples came together *to break bread* (*v.* 7): 'And when he was gone up, and had broken the bread' (*v.* 11).

[2] Cf. Lam. iv, 4.

together had been a special feature of the intercourse between Jesus and His disciples, a suggestion confirmed by the Gospel narratives of the feeding of large numbers at a time, where the expression 'break the bread' is again used[1] (Mk. vi, 41, viii, 6; Mt. xiv, 19, xv, 36; Lk. ix, 16). This is not at all surprising in view of the practice of a contemporary Jewish society which in some respects closely resembled the Christian, the society of Essenes. The Essenes are said to have numbered about 4000 in Palestine in the time of our Lord. They were essentially a monastic community (and in this respect as well as in some others clearly to be distinguished from the Christians). Their headquarters were situated at Engedi in the desert of Judæa, and they made their morning and evening meals religious ceremonies for which they prepared by careful ablutions and by clothing themselves in white.

Jesus, then, we may suppose, was in the habit of holding similar sacred meals with His disciples,[2] the last and most memorable of which took place on the evening before His

[1] Apart from the passages to which reference has already been made the expression 'break bread' is found in the New Testament only in Acts xxvii, 35: St Paul in the storm at sea urged the ship's company to eat and set them an example—'he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat'. Even here the phrase evidently connotes some formal and conspicuous action. It is worth while noting that our phrase 'break bread' for 'take food' is unknown to any ancient language. In Heb. it is only found of the act of breaking up a loaf for the purpose of distributing portions of it.

[2] It is very interesting to note that in some of the earliest of the paintings in the Christian catacombs at Rome our Lord is

Crucifixion. On this occasion when He broke the bread He said, 'This is my body'.[1]

The disciples, therefore, 'in breaking bread at home' (Acts ii, 46) were only continuing a practice to which they had become accustomed in the company of Jesus Himself. And from the first, that most recent occasion, the supper before His Death, with His strange and arresting words, can scarcely have failed to be in their minds; though how precisely it was referred to we do not know.

What is clear, however, is that from time to time when the disciples were assembled for the breaking of the bread and for prayer they found themselves moved by a spirit which they recognized to be the spirit of Jesus.[2] They felt their hearts burn within them as they used to do in the old days as they listened to His words: and they were overjoyed at the consciousness that He was with them still. How that could be they hardly at first stopped to ask. The theory of it came later when they had had time to reflect upon the experience.

represented as sitting at table with His disciples on the occasion apparently of the 'Last Supper', but the food provided consists of loaves and fishes, and the great baskets stand ready to receive the fragments.

[1] Mk. xiv, 22; Mt. xxvi, 26; Lk. xxii, 19 (even in the shorter 'Western' text, as that text now stands).

[2] Note that what struck St Luke about this rite was above all the fellowship associated with it (see below, p. 62). Note also the absence of any reference to the Cup. Does this mean that wine was not always provided, and that the breaking of the bread took place at the ordinary simple meals of poor people consisting of bread and a little relish with water only to drink?

Moreover they soon discovered that the experience was one which they could share with others, even with those who had never seen Jesus in the flesh.

For on the next great festival of the Jewish year, exactly fifty days after the day of the great tragedy, they felt themselves moved to take public action.

It was Pentecost, the festival which marked the conclusion of the grain harvest and was probably also associated with the giving of the Law upon Mount Sinai. Jerusalem was thronged with crowds of pious Jews from the country and from abroad. What happened exactly it is difficult to make out. The disciples appear to have been carried away by a sudden strange impulse into the psychology of which we need not enter. It was perhaps the first occurrence of the phenomenon of *glossolalia* (speaking with tongues) described by Paul in 1 Cor. xiv.[1] According to the narrative of Acts the disciples rushed in a body into the street in such a state of exaltation and uttering such strange sounds that many of the bystanders thought them 'filled with new wine' (Acts ii, 13).

But what chiefly concerns us is the speech of St Peter for which the scene described in Acts ii is the setting. St Luke, though himself a later convert, seems to have got hold of at least the substance of the earliest Christian preaching; and that is what we must look for in St Peter's speech (Acts ii, 14–36).

St Peter begins by declaring that this strange 'prophesying' which the multitude had witnessed was nothing more or less than the fulfilment of a prediction of the prophet

[1] Note that nothing is said as to any 'breaking of the bread' in connexion with the gathering there described.

Joel (Acts ii, 16 ff.; Joel ii, 28 ff.), and was, in itself, an indication that these were 'the last' days, that is, the days associated with the coming of GOD's Kingdom.

The hope that the present order of things in which earthly force prevailed and GOD's people were under the heel of their oppressors would be brought to an end by GOD, whose sovereignty should thus at last be realized on earth, was widely and earnestly held among the Jews of the time. There was no official doctrine on the subject, and there were many variations upon the central theme. For most people, though not all, the hope centred in the expectation of a king chosen by GOD, the Messiah,[1] God's anointed. According to some—for example, the author of the seventeenth of the so-called Psalms of Solomon (in the latter half of the first century B.C.)—the Messiah would be a descendant of David, a victorious earthly ruler, gifted with miraculous powers and altogether righteous. Others, however, like the author of the Similitudes of Enoch, who wrote probably in Galilee in the first half of the first century B.C., expected a celestial Messiah who was even now with the Ancient of Days in heaven, waiting for the time appointed when He should come to judge the earth. His coming would be catastrophic and awe-inspiring. It would be a day of wrath for all the enemies of GOD and of GOD's people.

It was about this 'wrath to come' that John the Baptizer

[1] The actual word Messiah does not occur as a title in the Old Testament but merely as the passive participle of the verb 'to anoint' (e.g. Ps. ii, 2). The title is, however, found in such pre-Christian writings as the Psalms of Solomon and the Book of Enoch (mentioned above).

had preached. Not only the wicked heathen, he had said, needed to be afraid, but also the wicked Israelites, 'sons of Abraham' though they were: 'Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of repentance' (Mt. iii, 7, 8; Lk. iii, 7, 8). The preaching of Jesus had begun with a similar call to repentance, although Jesus had made central in His teaching a phrase hardly found in the apocalyptic writings to which reference has been made, 'the Kingdom (i.e. the *sovereignty*) of God', and referred to His proclamation of its nearness as 'gospel', i.e. 'good news': 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the gospel' (Mk. i, 15).

And now the first point St Peter makes in his speech on the day of Pentecost is, as we have already seen, that the strange prophesying of the disciples is evidence that the last days, i.e. the Messianic days, as foretold by Joel (Acts ii, 16–21), have actually arrived. 'We are all the more certain', St Peter goes on to say in effect, 'for we know who has been chosen king. It is none other than Jesus of Nazareth, "a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you" (Acts ii, 22). You crucified Him (and even that was in accordance with God's plan), but He is still alive, as we can testify. God has raised Him from the dead, thereby fulfilling another otherwise unfulfilled prophecy of the Old Testament (Ps. xvi, 8–11) and making Him both lord and Messiah—this Jesus whom ye crucified.'

And when St Peter's audience 'were pricked in their heart', and asked 'men and brethren, what shall we do?'

the Apostle said to them, 'Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Messiah unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost' (Acts ii, 38).

'Repent and be baptized'—it might almost have been John the Baptizer preaching again. John's practice of baptizing had struck his contemporaries as something new.[1] Probably he meant it to be a symbolic action, like one of the symbolic actions so often performed by the Old Testament prophets. Very likely he had in mind Ezekiel's words, 'I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean'.(Ezek. xxxvi, 25), and accordingly baptized those who were convinced by his teaching as a sign that they on their part had genuinely repented and that God, on his part (as John felt he had prophetic authority to say), was accepting their repentance and was giving them cleansing.

But John went further. He foretold the coming of a Messiah who would baptize not merely with water but with Holy Spirit (Mk. i, 8).

And now the baptism advocated by St Peter is defined precisely as this baptism anticipated by John, the Messiah's baptism. As servants and representatives of the Messiah, the disciples baptize in His name. They were conscious that they had themselves received an endowment of Holy Spirit, and they felt constrained to act for their Master. Probably in the enthusiasm of the moment they hardly realized what a venture of faith it was. However that may be, there could be no doubt about the immediate

[1] Mk. xi, 30. Note that the question is not about *the teaching* but *the baptism* of John.

effect. Large numbers from that day on began to enter into fellowship with them and actually to share their own exhilarating indescribable experience, particularly 'in the breaking of the bread and in the prayers' (Acts ii, 42).

St Luke lays special stress upon the sense of fellowship which was from the first one of the leading characteristics of the Christian Society. The first chapters of Acts are dotted all over with phrases like 'with one accord' (ὁμοθυμαδόν, i, 14, iv, 24), 'together in one place' (ὁμοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό, ii, 1), 'together' (ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό, ii, 44, 47). In their fellowship the Christians found the greatest delight (ii, 46, iv, 35), and a practical result of it, natural enough in the circumstances as we shall see later, was an entirely voluntary[1] communism. 'The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul: and not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common' (Acts iv, 32).

[1] N.B. Acts v, 4.

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CHAPTER TWO

THE THEOLOGY OF THE FIRST DISCIPLES

THE first disciples were all Jews and did not cease to live as Jews when they became members of the Christian Society. They continued 'stedfastly with one accord in the temple' (Acts ii, 46): they were 'continually in the temple, blessing God' (Lk. xxiv, 53).

The people of Jerusalem were used to religious societies. We ourselves know of three, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes, whom we have already mentioned. Probably the Christians seemed to their neighbours to be a new kind of Essene,[1] only more orthodox; and their obvious zeal and their remarkable cheerfulness and friendliness won them general favour (Acts ii, 47).

What distinguished the Jewish Christians from their fellow-countrymen was, above all, the belief that the expected king, Messiah, God's anointed, had already appeared in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. And this belief they confidently proclaimed. Every day, in the Temple and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ (Acts v, 42) (i.e. the *anointed*, the word being simply the Greek word for the Hebrew word *Messiah*).

[1] The Essenes, among other peculiarities, rejected animal sacrifices and sent offerings of incense only to the Temple; and they were supposed to regard the sun with religious veneration.

For they felt responsible for the spread of the knowledge of the Messiahship of Jesus which had been committed to them (Acts x, 42).

Now it was comparatively easy to persuade people that Jesus was a prophet. That was exactly what the multitude thought Him to be when He made His triumphant entry into Jerusalem. 'Who is this?' all the city had asked; and the multitudes had replied, 'This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee'[1] (Mt. xxi, 10, 11). And though the populace had apparently been subsequently persuaded by some of the prominent religious officials that Jesus was an impostor, they were not accustomed as a rule to place much confidence in such leadership and were quite capable of being brought, under a revulsion of feeling, to believe that His death had been due to malice and manipulation and that He really was a prophet after all.

But the Christians went further. They claimed not only that Jesus was *a* prophet but *the* prophet: *the* prophet of whom Moses had spoken—'A prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me' (Deut. xviii, 15). Jesus had given evidence of the possession of the spirit of might by the mighty works and wonders and signs which GOD had done by Him (Acts ii, 22); and this spirit of might was an endowment prophesied by Isaiah (Is. xi, 1, 2) of 'the shoot out of the stock of Jesse' who should be the Messiah. But the crowning evidence was the Resurrection. 'This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses' (Acts ii, 32). From this signal act of GOD 'let all the house of Israel know assuredly,

[1] Cf. also Lk. xxiv, 19.

that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified' (Acts ii, 36; cf. xvii, 31).

Perhaps the disciples regarded the Resurrection as the actual coronation of the chosen king.[1] At any rate they had no hesitation in declaring that the king was Jesus. And this was the burden of their preaching: GOD had made Him Messiah and so given Him lordship.

The word lord (κύριος) has a wide range of meanings. The polite son in the parable (Mt. xxi, 30) said to his father, 'I go, sir'[2] (and went not). On the other hand the word is regularly used in the LXX, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, to represent the sacred name of GOD which was held to be too holy to be pronounced. In the various religious associations which were springing up in the Roman Empire in the two or three centuries before and after the beginning of the Christian era, the title 'lord' was commonly applied by each association to its own particular deity, e.g. 'the lord Sarapis', or 'the lord Mithras'.[3] Thus it is not surprising that it became the usual title of Jesus among the Gentile Christians. It was natural to St Luke himself to use it so.[4] Some modern scholars have affirmed that the title was first introduced in Gentile circles at Antioch. Very likely its application to Jesus in this sense as the special object of the worship of

[1] Cf. Rom. i, 4, 'designated the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead'; cf. also Phil. ii, 9.

[2] Similarly the Greeks address Philip with respect (Jn. xii, 21), 'Sir, we would see Jesus'.

[3] So also in the worship of the Emperor, 'the lord Caesar'.

[4] E.g. Lk. vii, 13, x, 1.

the Christians may have begun there, but that Jesus was called 'lord' by Aramaic-speaking Christians is proved by the occurrence of the phrase *Marana tha* (1 Cor. xvi, 22; cf. *Didache*, x, 6). These letters can be divided in two ways: *Maran atha*, 'our Lord is coming' (or, 'will come');[1] or *Marana tha*, 'our Lord, come';[2] *Maran* and *Marana* being *Mara*, 'lord', with variant forms of the pronomial suffix *n*, *na*, 'our'.

Two difficulties would immediately arise in the minds of an intelligent Jewish audience whenever they heard Jesus preached as Messiah. First, if Jesus was really GOD's Messiah, why had He appeared only to disappear again? And secondly, if Jesus was really GOD's Messiah, why had He been permitted to die a criminal's death, and indeed a death specially associated in the Old Testament with GOD's curse? For Jesus had been 'hanged on a tree' (Acts v, 30, x, 39), and according to Deut. xxi, 23,[3] 'he that is hanged is accursed of God'.

To the first of these questions the disciples had a ready answer. The Messiah was already crowned in heaven, not yet upon earth, but at the time appointed He would reappear crowned upon earth. He would be crowned as judge; and in God's mercy an interval was provided that

[1] The form of the verb may be translated either by a present or by a future. [2] I.e. a precatory imperative.

[3] 'And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree; his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt surely bury him the same day; for he that is hanged is accursed of God.' The application of this passage to Jesus, suggested in Acts v, 30, x, 39, is worked out by St Paul in Gal. iii, 13.

men might have opportunity for repentance. 'Repent ye therefore', said St Peter in the temple to the crowd that gathered after the healing of the lame man at the Gate Beautiful, 'and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; and that he may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, whereof GOD spake by the mouth of his holy prophets which have been since the world began' (Acts iii, 19–21). There seems to be a suggestion here that the sooner they repent the sooner GOD will send back to them His Messiah.

For a solution of the second difficulty the disciples turned to the Old Testament. They relied largely on the Old Testament for confirmation of their belief that Jesus was the Messiah, a belief itself based on His Resurrection from the dead. They felt their belief powerfully confirmed if they could shew that the various things prophesied in the Old Testament of the coming Messiah had actually found fulfilment in connexion with Jesus.

In the second speech recorded of St Peter he refers to the divine necessity that the Messiah should suffer, a necessity maintained by the mouth of GOD's prophets (iii, 18), but he offers no theory or explanation of this necessity. He speaks of the work of Jesus in a way which reminds us of the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen: Moses and the prophets having failed to bring the Jews to true repentance and amendment of life, 'unto you first God, having raised up his servant, sent him to bless you, in

turning away every one of you from your iniquities'[1] (iii, 26).

Our attention is caught by that word 'servant' (παῖς) (iii, 13, 26). In the Greek the word is ambiguous. It might be translated either 'child' or 'servant'.[2] Where precisely are to be found prophecies of the suffering of GOD's 'child' or 'servant'? The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah occurs at once to our minds. This is the very word used in the LXX for the Servant of the Lord in the 'Servant' songs of the prophet Isaiah. The application of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah to our Lord is one of the most important steps in theology taken by the primitive Church. This passage of Scripture was not, so far as we know, applied to the Messiah by the Jews,[3] and its application to Jesus by the Christians may have been first developed by the Hellenists, the Jews who habitually spoke Greek and read the Old Testament in Greek. That the Messiah was sometimes, if not often, referred to as GOD's son, we have evidence, e.g. in Enoch cv, 2; 4 Ezra vii, 28, 29: and it is probable that passages of the Old Testament like Ps. ii, 7:[4] 'Thou art my son; This day have I begotten thee', were already given a Messianic interpretation by the Jews; if for no other reason, because these passages attribute to the 'son' a world-wide dominion 'such as was not a historical

[1] Cf. v, 31.

[2] Cf. the French *garçon*.

[3] See H. Wheeler Robinson, *The Cross of the Servant*, pp. 51 ff. (Student Christian Movement.)

[4] Cf. Ps. lxxxix, 26, 27 and 2 Sam. vii, 14, where Solomon is spoken of as GOD's son. Cf. also Mt. xvi, 16, xxvi, 63.

reality in the time of the poet, or in any previous or subsequent time in history'.[1] Moreover, if there is one thing more certain than any other about the teaching of Jesus it is that He regularly and habitually spoke of GOD as 'Father'; and it may be that there was something about this constant, invariable practice of His which in the first instance led His disciples to infer that His consciousness of His sonship to God was clearer and stronger and closer than theirs—indeed different from theirs. Very soon therefore they came to feel that He was GOD's Son in a sense which did not apply to themselves.

GOD's Son: and the Greek-speaking Jews found this word 'son' in the 'Servant' songs of Isaiah.[2] It is therefore not improbable that some of the Jews from abroad who were present in such multitudes in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost and were 'pricked in their heart' (Acts ii, 37) and became Christians, were the first to apply these passages of Isaiah to Jesus the Messiah.[3]

This identification of Jesus with the 'servant' of GOD

[1] Briggs, *Inter. Crit. Comm.* on Ps. li.

[2] The Hebrew word used in these songs is unambiguous and means 'servant' only. In Mk. i, 11 the saying connected with the baptism of Jesus, 'Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased', combines a quotation from a Messianic psalm (Ps. ii, 7, *thou art my son*) with words from the first of the 'Servant' songs (Is. xlii, 1, *in whom my soul delighteth*).

[3] No doubt Jesus Himself was familiar with Is. liii and very likely referred to it in His teaching as shewing that GOD's servants were often called upon to suffer and that their suffering had redemptive value (cf. 4 Macc. vi, 28, 29; xvii, 21, 22); even if He did not apply the passage specifically to the Messiah or to Himself as Messiah.

spoken of by Isaiah was, as we have already observed, of the first importance; and that for two reasons. In the first place it enabled the Christians to give an answer to the question, 'Why should the Messiah have had to undergo such shameful suffering?' They could now reply with the prophet: 'Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows...he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all...he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors' (Is. liii, 4 ff.). In other words the Messiah's suffering was vicarious and redemptive. It was because of sin He suffered, sin not His own; and through His suffering sinners were rescued. Their sorrows were removed, they received healing, they were restored to peace.

And so, in St Peter's address to Cornelius and his friends, remission of sins, hitherto mentioned in connexion with the repentance (Acts ii, 38, v, 31) which is to be one of the fruits of the Messiah's influence, is directly associated with the name of Jesus and faith in Him: 'through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins' (x, 43).[1]

We have interpreted[2] 'baptism in[3] the name of the

[1] Cf. Acts iv, 12.

[2] Chapter I, p. 11.

[3] In Acts viii, 16 the preposition is 'into', but in Hellenistic Greek the distinction between the two prepositions is not to be pressed.

Messiah' as baptism authorized by the Messiah: but probably the expression also means something like 'into union with the Messiah', 'into the company of those whom the Messiah recognizes as his own'. It was one of the expectations connected with the Messiah that the people ruled over by Him should be free from sin.[1] Those who were marked out, sealed, as later writers put it, as His, were assured of salvation, i.e. security (Acts iv, 12) in the coming judgement when He should inaugurate the new era by executing judgement upon all mankind (x, 42 ff., xvii, 31).

In the second place the identification of Jesus with the servant of the Lord spoken of by Isaiah helped the Christians to realize that their mission as His representatives extended beyond the bounds of Judaism. 'Behold my servant, whom I uphold; my chosen, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgement to the Gentiles...' (Is. xlii, 1). 'I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles' (*ibid.* xlii, 6). 'It is too light a thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth' (*ibid.* xlix, 6). No doubt the disciples were slow in grasping the implications of such broad ideals, but already we have a hint that their thoughts had begun to turn in these directions in the word 'first' (Acts iii, 26)—'Unto you *first*

[1] E.g. Ps. Sol. xvii, 28–30, 41, 48, 49.

God, having raised up his servant, sent him to bless you'.[1]

But as the actual wording here is, no doubt, St Luke's, the point must not be pressed. And indeed the same caution must be exercised with regard to all the arguments which have been brought forward in so far as they depend upon the turn of a phrase.

But it may still have been worth while to venture into details as we have done in order to be in a position to estimate the general effect of the evidence as a whole. The 'scenes from early days' which St Luke gives, examined in this way, shew themselves at all events to be a consistent series. They give us an impression of the beginnings of Christian life and thought which, so far as we can judge, and so far as we are able to test it, is correct. They are not different from what we might, on general grounds, have expected; and they are not only consistent with the subsequent history but help to throw light upon it.

St Luke's account does, for example, help us to understand the teaching St Paul 'received' (1 Cor. xv, 3) when he became a Christian. To mention one point only: St Paul says that he was taught that 'Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures'—which is as we have seen, without further definition, precisely the doctrine expressed in the speeches of St Peter as recorded in Acts.

Up to this point, then, the Christians have been simply a Jewish sect, convinced that Jesus of Nazareth is the long-expected Messiah, now crowned in heaven and soon to

[1] Cf. Acts iv, 12: 'Neither is there any other name under heaven that is given among men, wherein we must be saved'.

reappear on earth as Judge in the great assize which shall usher in the Kingdom of GOD and the new age.

They have come also to believe that the explanation of the Messiah's Death is to be sought along the lines of Is. liii, and that His suffering has had vicarious and redemptive efficacy: further, that those who by repenting and being baptized are united to the company which belongs to the Messiah and are called by His name receive remission of their sins and a special endowment of Holy Spirit.

But these beliefs are not as yet fully thought out or their further consequences realized. In particular various questions concerning the relation of the Christians to the Jewish Law on the one hand and to the Gentiles on the other have not yet been raised.

BOOKS FOR REFERENCE

In addition to the books mentioned at the end of the last chapter:

C. ANDERSON SCOTT. *The Fellowship of the Spirit.* (J. Clarke, 1921.)

W. BOUSSET. *Kyrios Christos.* (2nd ed.) (Vandenhoeck u. Ruprecht, 1921.)

CHAPTER THREE

OPPOSITION AND EXPANSION

OUR conclusion that in the first chapters of Acts St Luke is in touch with genuinely historical tradition is confirmed by the way in which he enables us to trace, on the one hand, the expansion of the Church and, on the other, the rise and growth of opposition.

At first, as we have seen, the disciples enjoyed the favour of the populace (Acts ii, 47) who found their zeal and cheerfulness attractive, and their peculiar opinions inoffensive. Moreover about some of them they recognized a kind of personal magnetism which was sometimes exercised with striking curative results (Acts iii, 1–10).[1] It is not surprising therefore that considerable numbers of men and women in Jerusalem actually became Christians (Acts ii, 41, iv, 4), and many others were inclined to join them.

The only section of the people which disapproved of the new movement from the very outset was a small one. It consisted chiefly of the highest officials of the Temple and their friends. Most, if not all, of them belonged to the Sadducean party. As Sadducees they were conservative in their religious views and disliked any kind of innovation. St Luke mentions their well-known disbelief in the resurrection of the dead as one of the causes of their antipathy to

[1] As to the powers of healing with which some of the Apostles were credited, see below, Chapter IX.

the teaching of the disciples (Acts iv, 2). But probably a more potent cause was their anxiety to preserve the peace. They were, in particular, responsible for order in the Temple precincts; and these crowds running together in Solomon's Porch alarmed them. They had Temple police and their own lock-up. So they seized the preacher who seemed to be the centre of disturbance and locked him up with his companion for the night (Acts iv). But they could do nothing really effective without the authorization of the Sanhedrin, the great council of seventy members which, though shorn of some of its powers, and entirely dependent, in the last resort, upon the good will of the Roman government, was still entrusted to a considerable extent with the actual administration of Judæa.

Next morning therefore the Temple authorities consulted some of the leading members of the Sanhedrin. Peter and John were examined, and made a spirited defence (iv, 13). The authorities were puzzled, and let the two Apostles off with a caution.

The Christians, however, were not to be intimidated, and they continued to preach in the Temple. As a matter of fact the Temple officials were in a weak position. They knew they were tolerated by the Romans only so long as they kept order. Their interference had been successful up to a point. Many now hesitated before becoming members of the new Society (v, 13). But the number of sympathizers with the movement was already so great that 'the captain of the temple' had to proceed with caution (v, 26). Rather by persuasion than by force (v, 26) he managed to bring Peter and some other Apostles—their

names are not given—before a more formal meeting of the Sanhedrin.

Here a new difficulty arose. For the Temple authorities had critics as well as supporters among the members of the council. They were, as we have already observed, Sadducees, and a strong and influential section of the council was composed of Pharisees, who, though upon occasion they would make common cause with the other party, were inclined, as a general rule, to be critical of their proposals. Recently they had seen reason to support the Sadducees in their application to the Romans for the infliction of the extreme penalty upon Jesus. But the case of the followers was not necessarily the same as that of their Master. It was possible, indeed, that He Himself had not been so dangerous a pretender as they had been led to suppose. At any rate His followers, though no doubt peculiar, seemed pious enough. And what mattered to the Pharisees more than anything else was piety.

So the Christians found unexpected defenders, and their punishment was mitigated into a beating. This they bore so pluckily that it did their cause good rather than harm. In fact the new Society prospered more than it had ever prospered—more than, in Jerusalem, it ever prospered again (Acts v, 40–42). 'The word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly; and a great company of the priests'—in spite of the higher command of the Temple—'were obedient to the faith' (vi, 7).

In the meantime all was not well within the Church. St Luke evidently admires the voluntary communism of

the earliest disciples, but he makes no attempt to hide the fact that it was difficult to organize and control. Some, like Ananias and Sapphira, were unwilling to submit to it though they were ashamed to allow their unwillingness to appear (v, 1–11). Others, certain Hellenists especially, complained that their friends were not getting their fair share in the daily distribution.

It is a striking testimony to the good spirit which animated the Society as a whole that the disciples were able to take effective steps to meet these difficulties. St Peter exercised a necessary, if severe, discipline: the multitude readily agreed to the suggestion of the Apostles that the management of business, the service 'of tables', should be entrusted to seven chosen men. From their names we should judge that all seven were Hellenists, i.e. Jews who spoke Greek rather than Hebrew. If so, it is a remarkable proof of the good feeling which had prevailed (Acts vi, 1–6).

Of these seven men one stood out above the others, not, so far as we know, in business ability, but in wisdom and power of thought and speech (vi, 10). This man, Stephen by name, was destined to open a new chapter in the history of the Church.

We know nothing about him beyond what St Luke tells us. What his opinions were we must gather, as best we can, from the charges his accusers made against him, and from the speech recorded of him in his own defence. St Luke evidently intends us to take this speech as representing the general position of the speaker.

It is easy to see that St Stephen is a Christian of a type

we have not hitherto met. His attitude to the Temple is different. His interpretation of the Old Testament is different. No doubt his accusers were right in thinking that his attitude to the Law was different too.

St Stephen's argument, as St Luke reports it, is never finished. Observing the growing hostility of his audience he breaks off into upbraiding and rebuke (vii, 51–53). But up to that point we can trace the thread of his discourse somewhat as follows: God has from the first in His good providence guided and watched over Israel His people. His presence has never been attached to any one place, nor can it be confined to any one shrine. His guidance and direction have been communicated to His people principally through the prophets, of whom Moses is the chief. But the people have again and again been rebellious and disobedient: and God has again and again given fresh instructions to meet the new situations created by His people's disobedience. Thus there is nothing necessarily permanent about the letter of the Law or the locality of the Temple. A new covenant accompanied by a new promulgation of law and the erection of a new sanctuary was made with Israel through Moses. The sanctuary was replaced in the time of David and Solomon. And now a great successor to Moses, a second Moses, has appeared in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

And there the thread breaks. But we may with some probability continue the intended argument thus: a new covenant is, accordingly, now to be looked for, with corresponding changes in respect of sanctuary and law.

These are, certainly, 'liberal', 'advanced' opinions. How had Stephen acquired them? We have no evidence that he had learned anything of the kind from the Christians. They, so far as we know, held the view ordinarily held by Palestinian Jews as to the special character of the Temple and the permanence of the Law.

It seems probable that Stephen, before he became a Christian, belonged to the 'liberal' wing of Hellenistic Judaism. Philo refers in one of his writings[1] to 'persons who regard the traditional law as a symbol of spiritual life; the symbolic meaning they seek with every care, but despise the literal meaning'. Philo does not approve of such an attitude. Though the symbolic meaning of the Law was his own main interest, he was careful in practice to observe its regulations literally.[2] And one of our chief difficulties in tracking down these 'liberal' Hellenists arises from the fact that almost the only notices of them which have come down to us are found in the works of those who disapprove of them. Thus Josephus[3] mentions a Jewish merchant who advised the famous royal convert to Judaism, Izates King of Adiabene, to abstain from undergoing the actual rite of circumcision lest it should cause disaffection among his subjects. Josephus evidently does not approve of the advice, and records with obvious satisfaction the fact that the king refused to take it.

Recent research has made substantial additions to the evidence of the existence of a type of Judaism surprisingly

[1] *De Migratione Abrahami* (ed. Cohn and Wendland, II, 277).
[2] *De Migr. Abr.* 89.
[3] *Antiq.* XX, 2, 4.

influenced by Hellenism. There were Jews in Asia Minor 'who tolerated mixed marriages and dropped circumcision':[1] and there was a distinct tendency in certain quarters to identify Jehovah, God most high, with Zeus Hypsistos. A Jewish synagogue in Mysia apparently actually worshipped Zeus Hypsistos.[2] In Palestine itself we have the Essenes, already mentioned, many of whose ideas, whatever their origin, were strange to Judaism proper.

No doubt there were various degrees of such 'liberalism' to be found among the Hellenistic Jews of the Dispersion, and we cannot say which best represented Stephen's opinions. But it is highly probable that his position before he became a Christian is to be looked for somewhere in this direction. If so, to advocate such views in Jerusalem, whether as a Christian or not, would certainly have brought him into conflict, sooner or later, with the Pharisees. But Stephen was actually a Christian at the time when public attention was directed to his preaching. No doubt he had found his conversion a great stimulus to his thinking and saw that his own convictions were confirmed, and given new and remarkable possibilities of developement, in connexion with the teaching about Jesus. At any rate the Pharisees were now thoroughly aroused: and the Pharisees, more than any other party, had the ear of the people. So that, if the condemnation of Stephen was secured by a trial (more informal than formal) before a certain number of members of the Sanhedrin, the penalty

[1] W. W. Tarn, *Hellenistic Civilisation*, p. 179. (Arnold.)
[2] *Ibid.* p. 180.

was exacted by the mob. Stephen was rushed outside the city and stoned to death before the Roman authorities realized what was happening.

And as the mob quickly dispersed, and as it was only an obscure fanatic who had been murdered, the Roman governor probably let the matter drop and made no further inquiries.

But for the Christians it was the beginning of serious trouble. 'There arose on that day a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria, except the apostles' (Acts viii, 1).

The Apostles perhaps felt it their duty to remain in the city. Possibly also it was realized that their opinions with regard to the Temple and the Law were not those of St Stephen. At any rate for the time they seem to have remained unmolested; and the persecution gradually died away (ix, 31). A few years later it broke out again, for the Christians never really regained the confidence of the non-Christian Jews. This time the persecution was directed especially against the leaders of the Church. Practically the whole of Palestine was now under the rule of Herod Agrippa I, a grandson of Herod the Great. Herod Agrippa had a reputation for piety, a reputation which he valued and took pains to sustain. From the point of view of the strict Jew the Christians were now clearly involved in heresy. So 'Herod the king put forth his hands to afflict certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also' (xii, 1–3). But Peter escaped,

and Herod died; and active persecution ceased again. There was little real religious force behind it.

One of the most prominent and conscientious of the persecutors, a young Pharisee named Saul, had himself suddenly become a Christian some time previously. The story of his conversion is too familiar to be told again here. St Luke regards it as so important that he finds occasion to repeat it no less than three times (ix, 1–19, xxii, 3–21, xxvi, 2–20). A striking modern parallel may be found in the conversion of the well-known Hindu mystic, the Sadhu Sundar Singh.[1] No doubt, as in the case of the Sadhu, sub-conscious influences had for some time been at work before the critical moment arrived. The very gallant end of Stephen, obviously a man of parts—and St Luke specially notes his charm of character (vi, 8)—could not have failed to impress the young rabbi.[2] None the less the crisis in his experience seemed to him to be sudden and overwhelming, and he retired into the Arabian desert[3] to think out his new position.

Meanwhile the dispersion of the disciples from Jerusalem had been the occasion of a forward movement on the part of the Church: 'they therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word' (viii, 4).

People who had become Christians while staying in Jerusalem had already taken the Gospel with them when

[1] B. H. Streeter and A. J. Appasamy, *The Sadhu*, pp. 5 ff. (Macmillan.)

[2] Cf. J. A. Hadfield, *Psychology and Morals*, p. 35. (Methuen.)

[3] I.e. probably the desert near Damascus. Cf. the three years spent by Josephus, as a young man, in the desert with the hermit Banus (Josephus, *Vit.* ii, 11).

they returned to their homes. Thus there had for some time been Christians in Damascus (ix, 2, 10). But now missionary work was more definitely undertaken. Philip the evangelist preached in Samaria and made many converts there (viii, 5–25). This was quite a new departure: for Samaritans were reckoned as at the most only half Jews.[1] But it had the approval (viii, 14) of the Apostles at Jerusalem, who sent a reinforcement in the persons of Peter and John to help to consolidate Philip's work. The conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch was another step beyond the limits of Judaism proper.[2]

More important still was the baptism of Cornelius, the Roman centurion, and his friends at Caesarea (Acts x).

St Luke relates the incident at length because he sees in it an anticipation of what was soon to become the settled policy of the Church. But St Peter had to defend his action before his brethren at Jerusalem, and it is clear that he regarded it as strictly exceptional. GOD had led him unmistakeably step by step: at no point could he have drawn back. 'Who was I, that I could withstand GOD?' (xi, 17). But St Peter's language seems to suggest that he would not take a similar step again without similarly decisive guidance. It was not St Peter who became the Apostle of the Gentiles.

On the other hand St Luke calls attention to the way in which the Christians as a whole overcame their prejudices.

[1] According to a saying of the rabbis (*Nidda*, iv, 2) 'the Sadducees when they keep the customs of their fathers are equal to the Samaritans'.

[2] See Deut. xxiii, 1; but cf. Wisd. iii, 14.

We cannot but feel, as St Luke himself evidently felt, that the temper they displayed did them the greatest credit and augured well for the future. 'When they heard these things, they held their peace and glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life' (xi, 18).

BOOKS FOR REFERENCE

In addition to the books already mentioned:

F. J. A. Hort. *The Christian Ecclesia.* (Macmillan, 1897.)

CHAPTER FOUR

GENERAL CONDITIONS IN THE GENTILE WORLD

Now that we have reached the point when Christianity is about to spread over the Roman Empire we had better attempt a brief survey of the social and religious conditions of that great Empire.

The Roman world as a whole was still conscious of gratitude to Augustus for the era of peace which he had won for it after a long period of internal and external strife. It now enjoyed reasonably good government throughout its vast provinces. These were all securely linked to the capital city and a traveller could journey thither more easily than at any later time down to the introduction of steam. An inscription tells us that a certain merchant of Hierapolis in Phrygia sailed round Cape Malea to Italy no less than seventy-two times, a passage which was regarded as one of the most dangerous in the Mediterranean. Ships were of a considerable size. Josephus says that there were six hundred people on board the ship which took him to Italy. Sailors were of course very dependent on the weather. A voyage from Puteoli to Alexandria might take anything from seven or eight days to fifty. Four to six knots was considered a fair average rate of sail.

On land the main roads were good. We can still walk on the Appian Way, paved with hewn blocks of stone fitted together without cement, and broad enough for two

carriages to pass abreast. An ordinary day's journey would be from thirty to fifty miles. Julius Cæsar is recorded to have travelled a hundred miles one day in a hired carriage.

The Empire was dotted over with large and prosperous cities. The population of Rome itself was not less than a million. Juvenal complains of the narrowness of the streets, the height of the houses, the expensiveness of lodgings, and the noise of the traffic—especially at night. 'None but the wealthy can get to sleep in Rome.'

In the towns as well as on the great estates in the country a considerable part of the population were slaves. Men had long been alarmed at their enormous numbers; and the alarm increased as time went on.

All manufacturers on a large scale depended on slave labour. Some slaves were highly trained in technical arts; some were employed as secretaries and in positions of responsibility and were well educated. Most slaves were on the whole treated humanely, if for no other reason, because it paid their master to treat them so. Many masters in their wills manumitted one or more of their slaves; many others allowed their slaves to save up honorariums and at length to use their savings to purchase freedom.

The freedmen formed a well-recognized class in society. They were much employed at court; they supplied most of the medical practitioners; and some of them acquired great wealth.

A certain amount of general culture was widely diffused, and that culture was Hellenistic. Greek was the lingua franca of all those parts of the Empire with which we are

concerned; and over them all lay a thin layer of Greek ideas and customs, Greek science, Greek art, and Greek philosophy. The Greek was not the Greek of the classical period either in language or thought, not pure Greek, but Greek diluted with other elements and influences, Persian, Egyptian, and what not.

Schooling, for those who were to receive systematic education at all, began at six or seven years of age with reading, writing and arithmetic. About twelve a boy passed into the school of the 'grammaticus' (i.e. *the teacher of literature*), where he stayed till he was about sixteen. Here he learned a little more Mathematics, a certain amount of such subjects as Geography and Music, but chiefly to recite set pieces, above all pieces from Homer. At the same time he was given plenty of exercise in drill and games and athletics.

For higher studies he went on again to some academy. If he were not going to be a specialist (a medical man for example) he would put himself under some teacher of reputation, or would go to some famous centre of learning such as Athens or Alexandria or Rhodes and take up Philosophy or Rhetoric. The latter was esteemed the most practically useful of all the more advanced studies, and the best rhetoricians like Quintillian had a lofty ideal of their profession. An orator, in Marcus Cato's definition, was *vir bonus dicendi peritus*, 'a good man who could express himself well'.

Philosophy was another favourite subject of study. It included, besides Metaphysics proper, Ethics and Psychology and what we now call Natural 'Science' (although

the term Natural 'Philosophy' is only just disappearing from use).

At a great University various types of philosophy were taught by various schools of professors and lecturers. At Athens, for example, there seem to have been four main schools: the Platonic at the Academy with a tendency to scepticism; the Aristotelian at the Lyceum largely occupied with specialized and practical studies (Botany, Geography, Psychology and the like); and the Epicurean and the Stoic schools, more recent in their developement and mentioned by St Luke (Acts xvii, 18). These last seem to have been more influential at this period than the others, the Stoic above all.

The main purpose of Epicurus himself (341–270 B.C.) was to deliver men from fear, especially fear of the gods and of life after death. His teaching is summed up in four Greek lines discovered at Herculaneum:

> There is nothing to fear in God:
> There is nothing to feel in Death:
> What is good is easily procured;
> What is ill is easily endured.[1]

The greatest of all the exponents of the Epicurean philosophy was the poet Lucretius, whose splendid poem dates from about 57 B.C. But though Epicurus himself advocated plain living and high thinking, his doctrines were used by some of his followers and successors in defence of voluptuousness and luxury; and as the pursuit of pleasure exhibited itself in the grossest and most revolting forms in

[1] C. F. Angus, in *Camb. Anc. Hist.* VII, 234.

the streets of the Hellenistic city, it is not surprising that healthy and clean-minded people reacted from a philosophy which laid itself open to such abuse; and the direction in which the reaction took place was commonly towards Stoicism.

The founder of Stoicism was a contemporary of Epicurus, Zeno of Cyprus (340–265 B.C.); but the original doctrines of the school had undergone considerable modification, as its members had shewn themselves willing and able to learn from other schools of thought, and, moreover, had all along kept in touch with the developement of Natural Philosophy, or, as we should say, Natural Science. Poseidonius of Rhodes, the great Stoic teacher who flourished about the beginning of the first century B.C., was a man of extensive and varied attainments in most departments of knowledge; and his encyclopedic works, fragments only of which have survived, were a veritable storehouse for writers like Cicero, Philo of Alexandria, Pliny, and Plutarch.

By the first century A.D., through the influence of comprehensive and eclectic teachers like Poseidonius, a considerable body of ideas had come to be held in common by the general educated public in all the countries bordering on the Eastern half of the Roman Empire. The later books of the Old Testament, and the books of what we call the Apocrypha, especially Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Ecclesiasticus, and the Book of Wisdom (generally known as 'the Wisdom literature'), seem to shew the influence of this common stock of philosophical and scientific ideas. The staple element in the whole seems to be Stoicism, but it is

a Stoicism modified by Platonism and Aristotelianism, and by other streams of thought.

If we are to understand the mental equipment of the early converts to Christianity from among the Gentiles, and even that of the Christian missionaries themselves and particularly that of the greatest of them, St Paul, we must briefly survey this conglomeration of contemporary ideas as it touches the subjects with which the Christian preaching was concerned.

Of all its various items probably the most important for our present study are those connected with *πνεῦμα*—spirit.

The Hebrew word for spirit is used in the earliest portions of the Old Testament most frequently either (1) of wind (literally e.g. the North wind, or figuratively) or (2) of the spirit of God giving men some unusual power, e.g. as prophets.

The notion underlying the word seems to be that of an invisible wind-like substance in motion. The word is used of that in man which is the subject of emotion, of thought, and, more rarely, of volition. This, the highest element in man, is conceived of as like in substance to 'spirit' in God. So the author of Ecclesiastes thus describes the death of human beings: 'Then shall the dust return to dust as it was, and the spirit shall return to God who gave it' (Eccles. xii, 7). Here already we may, with all probability, see Hellenistic influence. For, according to the Stoics, there was immanent in all the world a fiery air-like substance which was itself rational. All men had within themselves a particle of this substance, this immanent Reason,

which alone was GOD. GOD is spirit, as Poseidonius explicitly says. Men therefore are essentially related to GOD, because reason in man is composed of the very same substance as that of which GOD's being consists.

This idea of a kind of divine fluid is found from very ancient times in Egypt[1] and probably existed elsewhere. In the minds of the later Stoics, under the influence of Platonism, the idea was gradually becoming less and less materialistic; and their conception of spirit (πνεῦμα) was tending towards a conception which on the one hand vaguely resembled the modern conception of 'energy', and on the other that of 'the immaterial'. The common possession of 'spirit' linked all mankind in one great family. Men are 'fragments of God', expressions of the Reason which appears also in the order of nature. It is their duty to exercise the will to live in conformity with nature. 'All of us', says Seneca, 'have the same origin, the same source: no man is nobler than another save him who has a more upright character and one better fitted to honourable pursuits.'[2] This 'cosmopolitan idea' was by no means confined to Stoicism. We find it for example in Menander (c. 300 B.C.), the most famous of the poets of the New Comedy:

> No honest man I call
> A foreigner; one nature have we all.[3]

Over against spirit, and in sharp contrast to it, the later

[1] Note especially the Egyptian conception of the *Ka*, a kind of personal fluid filling a man and flowing to his very extremities.

[2] *De Ben.* iii, 28.

[3] (Frag. 602), C. F. Angus, *op. cit.* p. 225.

Stoics (again partly under Platonic influence) placed the flesh. Σῶμα σῆμα, the phrase ran, *the body is a tomb*. 'A corruptible body weigheth down the soul' (Wisdom ix, 15). The body must be subdued: Reason must control all the irrational parts of human beings. The Stoics carried the subjugation of the body to the point of asceticism. Not only fear and pleasure but pity and love are forbidden to the Sage. But we must remember that it is to them that we owe the use of the word Conscience (συνείδησις) in a moral sense, with very nearly the meaning we still give it. Nothing is to be set in the scale against Virtue. A good man will not deviate from the path of duty whatever Fate has in store for him.

Belief in Fate was widespread and Fate was connected with the stars. Astrologers were commonly believed to be able to read men's destiny written in the aspect of the heavens at the time of their birth. What Suetonius says about Tiberius[1] would probably apply to very many others: 'Although somewhat neglectful of the gods and of religious matters, being addicted to astrology and firmly convinced that everything was in the hands of fate, he was nevertheless immoderately afraid of thunder. Whenever the sky was lowering he always wore a laurel wreath, because that kind of leaf is said not to be blasted by lightning'.

Such 'loss of nerve' was common. It shewed itself also in the almost universal belief in magic. The earliest papyrus yet discovered is a papyrus full of magical formulae. Many such papyri have been found. Certain places like Thessaly

[1] *Tiberius*, lxix.

and Ephesus (Acts xix, 19) were famous for witchcraft and sorcery.

One other popular belief must be mentioned, the belief in demons. Books like the book of Enoch (first century B.C.) explain how demons throng the air, haunt certain places like waterless deserts, and in certain circumstances attack men.

All these and many other beliefs found advocates in various quacks and vagrants and street-corner preachers. The less educated masses listened to their babble until their minds were reduced to a state of uneasiness and confusion.

Of Religion four main types may be distinguished. There were, first, the old long-established cults: the Olympian deities with their temples well endowed and beautifully situated and appointed; often containing works of art, like the Zeus of the sculptor Pheidias at Olympia, the Cnidian Aphrodite, the Hermes of Praxiteles, unsurpassed to this day: also, worthy of special mention as of great practical value, the cult of Aesculapius, the healer, whose temples served as health-resorts or even as hospitals, and whose priests interwove in their religious teaching a great deal of sound hygiene and practised what would today be called 'suggestion' to the great benefit of many sufferers. And besides the classical Greek gods and goddesses almost every locality had its tutelary divinity or at least its hero or demi-god.

There was indeed a tendency to identify the local deity with Zeus or Hermes or one of the other well-known deities of classical Greek literature. Moreover the more

educated were inclined to believe in divinity-in-general rather than in deities-in-particular and to think of one divine being manifesting itself in various forms. They were generally ready therefore to take part in more than one form of worship. No doubt most people had preferences and there were many forms to choose from: from the stately and decorous worship of Athena or Apollo to the wild orgies in honour of Dionysus or Cybele.

The second kind of religion to which reference must be made was actually a recent introduction, though in principle it was old enough: the worship of the Emperor.

The Greek dynasties which had reigned over the great kingdoms into which Alexander's empire had been divided, the Ptolemies, for example, at Alexandria, and the Seleucids at Antioch on the Orontes, had regularly received divine honours and the title θεός had often appeared on their coins. But it was not till 29 B.C. that Rome followed their example. In that year Augustus gave permission for a temple in honour of himself and the genius of the Roman people to be set up at Pergamum. Similar temples were soon to be found in every province of the Empire. Deputies from the various cities of each province were formed into 'concilia' for the due performance and maintenance of the new worship. These 'concilia' met annually, and their meeting was made a great social function and celebrated with public ceremonies and above all with the Games.

This developement was, after all, more reasonable than might appear on the surface. To the ordinary provincial the Emperor was a mighty power far removed but capable of making himself felt, for good or ill, immediately and

decisively anywhere in the civilized world. It was not difficult to believe that something divine must reside in such a potentate.[1] Politicians and statesmen of course encouraged the belief and tried to use it as a means of welding the Empire into a common loyalty. As a religion, however, it did not go very far towards satisfying the deeper needs and aspirations of mankind.

These more intimate religious feelings were better provided for in what are commonly called 'the mystery religions'.

Voluntary religious associations, 'thiasoi'—cult-brotherhoods—formed for the private worship of some special deity, had sprung up and were still springing up all over the Eastern half of the Empire. A little later the movement became stronger still, and the second century of our era witnessed a veritable revival of religion throughout the Empire.

These cults varied a great deal in detail from the venerable and dignified mysteries at Eleusis to the strange orgies in honour of Attis. But the fundamental conceptions underlying them were essentially the same. After a period of preparation and ritual purification the initiated was admitted to a part in a sacred drama representing the mythical experiences of the cult-deity. The central deities

[1] Specially remarkable is the language of an inscription (11 or 9 B.C.) at Priene in honour of the birthday of Augustus (23 Sept.): 'The birthday of the God is become the beginning of glad tidings through him to the world...the Saviour of the whole human race...God of God...Zeus of father Zeus' (H. von Gaertringen, *Inschriften von Priene* (1906), p. 80, No. 105).

of all the more important of these cults were deities who had died and revived again. In a sacred drama the adventures of the god were re-enacted by his worshippers who thereby felt themselves entering into the divine experience and became conscious of intimate spiritual relationship with their god. This they took to be a promise and a foretaste of a blessed immortality. Aristotle understood the psychology of these rites very well.

'It is not', he says, 'that the initiated learn anything, but they feel certain emotions and are put into a certain state of mind.'[1]

In some cases the experience might best be described as one of mystical communion with the deity: in others, however, the initiated professed to have the sense of a still closer union of mystical self-identification with the divinity. Thus in some rite connected with the great Egyptian god Osiris, the worshipper at a certain point in the ceremony was apparently taught to exclaim, 'I am Osiris'.

If pressed to describe the *modus operandi* of such experiences the 'mystagogos' would probably have had resort to some such conception of spirit as that which has already been mentioned. The union with the deity was effected through the reception of or contact with some of that divine spirit of which the being of the deity consisted.

How far 'the mysteries' exercised an elevating influence on the character of those who were initiated into them is a matter of dispute. No doubt the more reputable of them

[1] Synesius, *de Dione*, 10.

were to some extent morally uplifting.[1] Porphyry quotes an inscription from Epidaurus: 'You must be pure when you go within the incense laden temple, and purity lies in thinking holy thoughts'.[2]

The fourth kind of religion to be met with at this period in the Empire is, from our point of view, of the highest importance: Judaism. Jewish communities, great or little, were found gathered around some synagogue or 'place of prayer' (Acts xvi, 13) in most of the cities situated on the great trade routes and in many others as well. But we must defer our study of the Jewish 'Dispersion' (as it is called) to a later chapter.

[1] See Aristophanes, *The Frogs*, 455; Cicero, *de legibus*, II, 14; Diodorus, V, 49; Origen, *Cels.* III, 59, etc. On the other hand see Diog. Laert. VI, 2 (§ 39). Diogenes complains that many bad characters were admitted. At Eleusis homicides and notorious criminals were excluded, otherwise there was, so far as is known, no moral test.

[2] Quoted by A. D. Nock in *Essays on the Trinity and the Incarnation*, p. 71.

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CHAPTER FIVE

THE MAIN POINTS IN THE TEACHING OF ST PAUL

(1) Union with Christ and its Results

One of the most decisive moments in the entire history of Christianity is the conversion of St Paul, the greatest of all Christian missionaries and the first Christian theologian. If we are to understand the growth and developement of the Christian religion it is of the first importance that we should grasp at least the main points of the great Apostle's teaching.

Immediately after his conversion, as we have already seen, came a period of retirement in Arabia. There can be little doubt that then and there St Paul worked out the main lines of his doctrinal position.

We must of course remember that St Paul's epistles are by no means systematic treatises. The points on which the Apostle lays most emphasis in any particular epistle are not necessarily those which he regards as the most important in Christian doctrine taken as a whole, but those which he feels the particular readers whom he has in mind at the moment need to have emphasized. Nevertheless by reading and re-reading such of his correspondence as remains, and paying careful attention to its background, we can reconstruct, with a considerable degree of certainty, the broad outlines of the system of thought upon which St Paul's theological position is built.

St Paul was a Jew of Tarsus in Cilicia. He came of a well-to-do family, and was educated as a Pharisee. He was evidently intended to become a rabbi, and St Luke tells us that the later stages of his education took place at Jerusalem under the famous rabbi Gamaliel. St Paul himself more than once lays stress on the strictness of his upbringing as an orthodox Jew. But it is worth notice that Gamaliel belonged to the school of Hillel, the more liberal of the two famous rabbinic schools. According to early testimony, Hillel went so far as to encourage his disciples to read Greek literature.[1] Moreover, as we have already seen, St Luke brings St Paul's conversion into close connexion with the death of Stephen the Hellenist. And further, St Paul spent at least part of his boyhood in a University city which was one of the centres in Asia Minor of the philosophy of the Stoics. Strabo tells us that what made the University of Tarsus chiefly remarkable was the interest taken in its studies by the citizens themselves. In such circumstances no intelligent man, keen and loyal though he might be as a Jew, could fail to be influenced by the general thought of his time. Philo, the learned Jew of Alexandria, a contemporary of Christ, is a case in point. There can be no doubt that he was profoundly influenced by the body of Hellenistic thought to which reference was made in the last chapter. In fact his works largely consist of attempts to read Hellenistic psychology and ethics into the Old Testament. Of course Philo could only do this by making the Old Testament narratives into elaborate

[1] The other school, the school of Shammai, discouraged the study of Greek.

allegories. But though this allegorizing of the Scriptures is Philo's main interest he still (as has already been observed) accepts the Mosaic Law in its literal sense and remains a loyal and orthodox Jew.

St Paul, we must remember, lived under similar conditions and must almost certainly have come under similar influences. We find him, for example, occasionally working out an allegory like one of Philo's; his use of the word 'conscience' is exactly the Stoic use; his conception of the flesh is not unlike that which was described in the last chapter; and so on.

We must therefore be on the look out both for Jewish and also for Hellenistic elements in the Apostle's theology. What do we actually find? The experience on the road to Damascus which brought St Paul finally into the Church presented itself to him as a revelation of the Messiah, and the Messiah as 'Son of God'. In St Paul's own words 'it was the good pleasure of God...to reveal his Son in me' (Gal. i, 15, 16).

Perhaps it is safest, as Lightfoot thought, to take the preposition as instrumental—through me, using me as the instrument, my circumstances and condition as the occasion of the revelation.[1] At all events the episode on the Damascus road constituted the beginning of that revelation of the 'Son of God'; and as a matter of fact St Paul lays great stress upon his actual experience of 'sight'. In the first epistle to the Corinthians, for instance, he makes it one of the grounds of his claim to apostleship. 'Am I not

[1] Cf. Gal. i, 24, 'they glorified God in me', i.e. my conversion was to them an occasion for glorifying God.

an apostle?' he asks; 'have I not seen Jesus our Lord?' (1 Cor. ix, 1). In view of the emphasis St Paul lays on this vision it is improbable that he had ever actually seen Christ in the flesh. At the same time it is inconceivable that he was ignorant of or uninterested in the traditions about Christ's teaching and personality which must have been still vivid and living in Christian circles.

St Paul's own references to Christ's earthly life are indeed few but they are of great significance. He appeals to his readers by the gentleness and considerateness of Christ (2 Cor. x, 1). He speaks of Christ's tender mercies (Phil. i, 8): 'Christ also', he says, 'pleased not himself' (Rom. xv, 3); and, in another well-known passage, 'Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ' (Gal. vi, 2). Christ was his ideal of what human life should be; He 'knew no sin' (2 Cor. v, 21), yet 'he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross' (Phil. ii, 8). 'Wherefore also', St Paul adds, 'God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father'.

'Lord', 'the Son of God'—so, no doubt, St Paul had heard the Christians speak of Him: and clearly they were thinking of no mere descendant of David, but a Messiah of the celestial type described in the book of Enoch. The Synoptic Gospels themselves shew decisively that the early Church in general conceived of the Messiahship of Jesus as being of this type. The application of the title 'Son of

man' to Jesus in such contexts as that of Mk. xiv, 62, 'Ye shall see the son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven', is in itself sufficient evidence of this. The actual title 'Son of man' never occurs in St Paul's writings. Jesus is to him above all 'the Son of God': not a mythical hero, but a historical person who only a very few years before had been crucified and had risen from the dead. St Paul, at some time or other, made careful inquiries about the last point; and might have carried them further had he not had the wonderful experience of seeing the Lord Himself. That personal experience was to him a striking verification of what the Christians averred about Jesus, viz. that He was now 'in the heavenlies'.[1] If so, the divine spirit of Jesus was liberated and capable of entering into men on earth.

For St Paul a Christian is a person who has the spirit of Christ—'if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his' (Rom. viii, 9).

Spiritual union with Christ is, according to St Paul's teaching, the fundamental secret of the Christian life: 'Christ in you, the hope of glory' (Col. i, 27). 'He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit' (1 Cor. vi, 17).

The expression 'in Christ' is found in St Paul's epistles[2] 155 times and only 41 times in the whole of the rest of the New Testament. It is used by him to denote the union between Christ and the Christian, and it suggests a union of the most intimate conceivable kind. It is a union effected by the power of GOD when a man has faith in Christ. This

[1] Eph. i, 3.

[2] Not counting the Pastorals.

faith is nothing less than the response and surrender of a man's whole being to the love of Christ. 'I live,' says St Paul, 'and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me' (Gal. ii, 20).

The Christian is conscious of this union with Christ in changed thought and purpose and desire. He finds himself thinking and planning and desiring according to the mind of Christ, as Christ thought and planned and desired. But, indeed, the union goes down into the profound depths of his being far below the limits of consciousness. There is something mystical in it, and it makes a man a new creature: 'if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new' (2 Cor. v, 17).

This, then, is the fundamental conception in St Paul's theology. Let us see how he applies it to the question of the Christian's status before God and to the general question of Christian conduct.

In thinking of a man's status before God St Paul starts as a Jew and a Pharisee with a deep sense of the grave importance of the matter. God is both the Lawgiver and the Judge of the Universe. St Paul pictures all men as standing in God's court. How may they secure a sentence of acquittal? That is the great and solemn question he asks.

Not, at all events, by punctilious observance of God's Law. However hard a man tries he will certainly fail to observe God's Law in its entirety (Rom. vii, 14–24). How then? The answer St Paul gives is that to be acquitted in

GOD's court a man must take his stand there ἐν Χριστῷ, *in Christ*.

Standing thus 'in Christ' he is no longer the same person. Indeed, as far as the court is concerned, he is not the same person at all. The old person about to be condemned by the Judge has disappeared. He is dead. In his place there stands a new person altogether, new in Christ Jesus. 'There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus' (Rom. viii, 1). The Judge accordingly pronounces a sentence of acquittal: the man, to use the technical theological term, is 'justified'. But he is not justified by a mere legal fiction. The Spirit of Christ already pervades his being. His 'sanctification'—to use another technical term—the process by which he is made holy, has actually begun.

The acquittal in GOD's court of the prisoner thus united with Christ is certain; but it clearly involves 'the passing over of sins done aforetime' (Rom. iii, 25). When a man sins he inflicts loss and damage not only upon himself but also upon the world so far as it lies within the orbit of his life and influence. How is the harm done to be made good? Not to repair it, merely to ignore it, would be unworthy of GOD as the Supreme Governor of the Universe.

Here the picture of the law court fades from St Paul's mind and its place is taken by two others. The first is a picture of the animal sacrifices still going on in the Temple at Jerusalem. Thoughtful men had, from time to time, questioned the value of the 'blood of bulls and goats' shed in this way (Ps. l). A few like the Essenes had ceased to offer such sacrifices; but the sacrificial system was clearly

arranged for in GOD's Law and most people were content to accept it as a mystery beyond their comprehension.

The second picture which rises before St Paul's mind is that of Christ upon the Cross. Why had it been necessary for the Divine Messiah to suffer such a death? St Paul is shocked at the manner of it (Gal. iii, 13).

But now the two pictures are seen together and they seem to throw light on one another—the mysterious requirement of sacrifice and the mysterious necessity for the death of the Messiah. The idea of sacrifice, which as Ruskin says 'has been manifested as one united and solemn instinct by all thoughtful and affectionate races since the world became peopled', is an attempt to express the truth that the effects of sin are repaired through the suffering, not only of the sinner, but of others on his behalf. It is through the vicarious suffering of GOD's servants who offer their lives in service, that reaches to the point of sacrifice and may involve death itself, that the harm done by sin is made good.

In some sense it must be true to say that in the suffering of His servants GOD Himself suffers. GOD's servants have been enduring sufferings on behalf of others since mankind came into being; and in all their affliction GOD Himself has been afflicted (cf. Is. lxiii, 9).

This redemptive suffering still goes on. St Paul speaks of himself as having a share in it—filling up on his part 'that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ' (Col. i, 24). But it is in the supreme sacrifice of Christ Himself, who is in a unique sense GOD's Son and the Divine Messiah, that GOD's redemptive work is exhibited in its highest

expression and in its profoundest and most far-reaching significance and effect. 'Him who knew not sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him' (2 Cor. v, 21). St Paul had made his own the Christian teaching he had received: 'how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures' (1 Cor. xv, 3).

We must go on now to consider the application of the fundamental principle of union with Christ to the question of Christian conduct. 'We cannot be saved as we are', said a great English philosopher, recently dead. 'We can only be saved by giving ourselves to something in which we remain what we are, and yet enter into something new'.[1] This comes very near to the thought of St Paul. 'We are saved', St Paul would say, 'by giving ourselves in entire devotion to the service and love of Christ.' A man so in Christ 'a new creature' is no longer 'under law', he says, 'but under grace' (Rom. vi, 14).

The controlling force of his life is now no longer from without but from within. It is a force not less but more effective than the external compulsion of Law. 'Faith without works' would have seemed to St Paul a silly phrase.[2] Luther rightly interprets the Apostle's thought when he says, 'Faith asks not whether good works are to be done, but before the question is asked, it has already done them, and is always doing them'.[3] 'The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that one

[1] Quoted in *The Times*, March 28th, 1929.
[2] Dr Sydney Cave, *The Gospel of St Paul*, p. 156.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 193.

died for all, therefore all died; and he died for all, that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again' (2 Cor. v, 14, 15). The Spirit of Christ, which is the Spirit of GOD, dwelling in a man (or again, to use what is, for St Paul, an equivalent expression, Christ dwelling in a man) impels him to right action and brings forth naturally and spontaneously the fruits of good living.

Here, according to the Apostle, is the whole secret of the good and beautiful life. In the chapter of the Epistle to the Romans to which we have already referred (vii) the Apostle gives a vivid picture of the working of what M. Coué called 'the law of reversed effort'. The very fact that a certain action is commanded and a conscientious man says to himself, 'I must do this', arouses in him the desire not to do it.

Instead of the formula, 'I must do this', St Paul recommends the formula: 'I am Christ's: I want to do this; and by the grace of God I can'.

Modern Psychology, at all events, is on the side of St Paul.

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CHAPTER SIX

THE MAIN POINTS IN THE TEACHING OF ST PAUL

(2) Baptism and the Lord's Supper

We might have expected that St Paul in the violence of his reaction from the ordinances of Judaism and in the enthusiasm of his discovery of the principle of Faith —Faith as opposed to 'works of Law'—would have had nothing to do with rites of any kind. But there were two rites already entrenched in Christian tradition and practice, and, far from rejecting them, St Paul readily accepted them, and tried to make them count for more in the spiritual experience of his converts. These two rites are, of course, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Perhaps one of the best ways in which to approach the Apostle's teaching with regard to both these rites is to begin by considering the meaning which is to be attached to a word which he uses in connexion with the former, the word *homoioma* (ὁμοίωμα). In Baptism, he says, we become united with Christ 'by the *likeness* (*homoioma*) of his death' (Rom. vi, 5).

St Paul is picturing the new convert totally immersed in the water of some river. For a moment he has disappeared, he is dead and buried, as Christ died and was buried. Then, as in the case of Christ, there is a resurrection. A new creature emerges to live a new life as a Christian. The process is enacted symbolically but the

result is real. The ancients took symbols, as they also took names and idols and imitative actions, more seriously than we commonly do. The symbolic action of baptism is to St Paul no mere, bare symbol, but an 'effectual sign' of grace,[1] a symbol producing some actual effect associated with the thing symbolized. Plato uses this word *homoioma* of finite things as the *likenesses* in which 'the ideas' (in his doctrine, the eternal unseen realities) are expressed.

So much by way of introduction: it is time now to pass on to details.

Baptism

(Rom. vi, 1–11 and cf. Col. ii, 12; also 1 Cor. xii, 13 and 1 Cor. x, 1–4)

To understand the importance which St Paul attaches to Baptism we must picture the rite performed not upon the baby of Christian parents but upon a convert coming into the Church from the pagan world. It is then obviously no bare symbol but a solemn expression of faith.

St Paul would not indeed have supposed that without faith Baptism 'could work any spiritual change'.[2] He assumes that the candidate has the kind of faith in Christ that he himself has, an overpowering devotion which sweeps him out of his past life and out of his mere self.

The question of the Baptism of an insincere candidate is never raised, though in one remarkable passage (1 Cor. x, 1 ff.) St Paul uses an allegorical illustration from the Old

[1] Article xxv of the xxxix Articles.

[2] Professor H. L. Goudge in the *New Commentary* (N.T.), p. 421.

Testament to emphasize the fact that both Baptism and the Lord's Supper may fail of their due effect. According to the Book of Numbers (xiv, 29, 37, xxvi, 64, 65; cf. Ps. lxxviii, 18 and cvi, 14) most of the Israelites who were 'under the cloud', and 'passed through the sea', and who also ate of the manna and drank of the water from the rock, were overthrown in the wilderness. GOD, therefore, could not have been well pleased with them. Here St Paul, after the manner of the rabbis, sees an allegory. The Israelites represent Christians; their 'baptism unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea', Christian baptism; their partaking of spiritual meat and drink, the partaking of the Lord's Supper. Hence, the Apostle argues, it does not follow that, because you have been baptized and because you partake of the Lord's Supper, you are in GOD's sight in a satisfactory condition. The Corinthians were evidently in danger of taking a mechanical view of the Christian rites and attributing to them merely as ceremonies some kind of automatic or quasi-magical effect.

St Paul, then, found Baptism as the already established rite of admission into the Christian Society. Baptism in the name of Jesus the Messiah followed upon repentance. Those who repented and were by Baptism admitted to join the company of the Messiah's people received remission of their sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts ii, 38).

St Paul emphasizes the reception of the Spirit at Baptism, using the metaphor of drinking. 'In one Spirit', he says, 'were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit' (1 Cor. xii, 13).

And the effect of the gift of the Spirit on which he lays stress is not the speaking with tongues or anything of that sort, but the flooding of our hearts with the love of GOD (Rom. v, 5).

St Paul did much to deepen the significance of Baptism in Christian thought. In illustration of this it may be noticed that he practically discards the metaphor of washing[1] for that of burial and resurrection (or rebirth). The convert is not merely bathed: he recapitulates the experience of his Lord; he dies and comes to life again, the new life, the life *in Christ Jesus*.

The Lord's Supper

(1 Cor. xi, 17–34 and x, 14–22)

Here again it is an already established institution with which St Paul is concerned. As to the exact form which 'the breaking of the bread' took before the Apostle's time we know hardly anything. The common meals of the Jewish Christians at Jerusalem were no doubt 'accompanied by table prayers of the familiar Jewish type',[2] that is by 'benedictions', the blessing of GOD for His gifts of bread and wine and of the other food provided. Was reference made on every occasion to what happened on the night before the Lord died? There is no reason to suppose so. On the contrary, if the evidence of that strange little early Christian hand-book, the *Didache*, counts for anything at all,

[1] He uses this metaphor once, in 1 Cor. vi, 11.
[2] A. D. Nock, *op cit.* p. 128.

we are forced to the conclusion that sacred meals at which there was a Eucharist (εὐχαριστία), a giving of thanks connected with Jesus, did not always include anything like a narrative of the Last Supper.

And further it is plain that whatever else took place at these Christian meals physical hunger and thirst were satisfied. They were real meals. Of ritual meals, meals in which only a fragment of bread and a sip of wine were taken, we hear nothing until a later date. The transition to the latter was not unnatural, especially in view of such abuses as those which St Paul had to condemn (1 Cor. xi, 20–22, 33, 34).

What particularly struck St Luke in connexion with the earliest Christian meals was, as we have already seen (Chapter 1), their simplicity, their joyousness, and the family feeling which prevailed. The dominant note was fellowship, real fellowship of spirit.

From what St Paul says in 1 Cor. xi it is clear that he himself always connected this meal of Christian fellowship with the scene in the Upper Room on the night of the Lord's betrayal. As to that scene he followed a tradition which he himself had received through earlier Christians, a tradition traceable ultimately,[1] as he believed, to the Lord Himself. In point of fact there was more than one tradition as to the precise events of the evening before the Crucifixion;[2] but according to St Paul's own account (1 Cor. xi, 23–26) Jesus

[1] 1 Cor. xi, 23. Note ἀπό (not παρά, Gal. i, 12) and the word παρέλαβον (elsewhere in St Paul's writings only of instruction from a Christian teacher) and cf. 1 Cor. viii, 10, xiv, 37.

[2] See note 1 at the end of this chapter.

had not only Himself 'broken the bread', but had intimated His desire that the rite should be afterwards repeated by His followers *with a view to recalling* Him to memory (*vv.* 24, 25), that is in order to bring the Lord Himself vividly to mind. In taking part in the Lord's Supper Christians were 'proclaiming the Lord's death' (*v.* 26), and they should go on doing this till He came again.

In this dramatic re-enactment of the Last Supper St Paul saw a symbolic representation of the Death of Jesus. That indeed is what he thought the Lord meant the Last Supper itself to be: a symbolic presentation of the impending sacrifice of Himself, in order to bring His disciples into willing and grateful acceptance of it and thereby into a new covenant relation with GOD.

The Last Supper probably took place in the evening which began the day Nisan 14th, and therefore was not the Passover meal proper which the Jews ate the next evening. But still it was a meal full of Passover associations. Passover was celebrated by the Jews in a dramatic way. They ate the Passover lamb in haste, standing, and girt as if about to set out for a journey; thus re-enacting the original Passover scene as depicted in Exodus xii. So, at a later time at all events, it could be thought that the Lord had made His last meal with His disciples a kind of pre-dated, anticipatory Passover, and He Himself, in view of His approaching death, had (dramatically as it were) taken the place of the Passover lamb.

In another passage in this epistle (1 Cor. v, 7) St Paul speaks of Christ as the Passover lamb: 'For our Passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ'. The blood of the

first Passover lamb was a token of GOD's covenant[1] to save the Israelites as His people when the Egyptians were punished. 'And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and there shall no plague be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt' (Ex. xii, 13). So in the Lord's Supper the Cup is connected with a new covenant under the terms of which GOD saves His people, the new Israel, the Church: 'This cup is the new[2] covenant in my blood' (1 Cor. xi, 25). Thus the whole action of the rite is viewed together as a re-enactment of the Last Supper and so a re-presentation of the Lord's sacrificial death. Those who take part in it share the benefits associated with the new covenant-relation with GOD inaugurated by that death.

To use such an occasion for selfish and even excessive eating and drinking as some of the Corinthians were doing (1 Cor. xi, 21) was an outrage of the grossest kind. St Paul urges his readers at all costs to avoid such desecration. It brings GOD's judgement and chastisement upon the community. In evidence of this the Apostle points to the fact that a number of the Christians at Corinth were suffering from general debility, and some had died.

As in the Passover the rite is taken as a whole and no great stress is laid upon any moment in it (certainly not, for instance, on the actual consumption of the lamb); so in the Lord's Supper. The whole must be held together as

[1] Probably other passages from the Old Testament, e.g. Ex. xxiv, 8, were also in the Apostle's mind.

[2] Cf. Jer. xxxi, 31.

a dramatic unity. Emphasis on some supposed moment of consecration or on the actual reception of the consecrated elements belongs to a much later developement: so also does the idea that the elements were in themselves life-giving food or the 'drug of immortality'. It is to be observed that St Paul never speaks of eating the Lord's body or drinking the Lord's blood.[1] We eat of the bread and in eating it we, together with our fellow-Christians, partake of Christ's body: we drink of the cup and in doing so we, together with our fellow-Christians, partake of His blood (1 Cor. x, 16, 17). If we eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord unworthily, we are guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord (xi, 27).

In the Book of Common Prayer Cranmer similarly avoids identifying the bread and the wine with the body and the blood in the beautifully chosen words of the central petition in the Prayer of Consecration: 'Hear us, O merciful Father, we most humbly beseech thee; and grant that we receiving these thy creatures of bread and wine, according to thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ's holy institution, in remembrance of his death and passion, may be partakers of his most blessed Body and Blood...'. The bread and the wine are symbols; and when the Lord said 'this *is* my body' He was not referring to identity but to representation—'this *represents* my body'.[2] But the symbols are not

[1] Cf. Cicero, *De natura deorum* III, xv, 41 ('When we call grain Ceres or wine Liber, we merely use a common style of speech, but do you think that anyone is so insane as to suppose that what he eats is God?').

[2] Similarly St Paul himself, e.g. Gal. iv, 24, 'these women *are* two covenants', i.e. these women *represent* two covenants.

bare symbols: they are 'effectual' symbols, symbols that really effect something.

Moreover, like the rabbis in the Talmud, St Paul loves to play on the double meaning of words and to dart from one sense or one association to another. Thus the Lord's body is the Church: we are the Lord's body; we ourselves therefore may be spoken of as bread.[1] Perhaps the thought of the Church as the body of Christ is in St Paul's mind in xi, 29: 'For he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgement unto himself, if he discern not the body'. Certainly the idea of the meal as the fellowship meal, the meal of the Christian society, is never absent. It comes out again, for example, in the passage in which the Apostle contrasts the table of the Lord with the table of devils[2] (1 Cor. x, 21). The Christian must not take part both in the sacred meal of the Christian society and also in a meal associated with a pagan cult. What pagan meals St Paul has in mind we do not exactly know. Two very interesting specimens of actual invitations to dinner 'at the couch of the Lord Sarapis' (one adding 'in the Serapeum') written on scraps of papyrus have been unearthed at Oxyrhynchus.[3] Such a dinner differed very little from a dinner to which a man nowadays invites his friend in a hotel except that the god was thought to preside.

At the Christian meal the Lord presides: indeed the

[1] Cf. also in 1 Cor. v, 8, '*the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth*'.

[2] Demons being, in the Apostle's as in the Jewish view, behind heathen sacrifices and idols (cf. Deut. xxxii, 17).

[3] *Pap. Oxy.* 110, 523.

repetition of His original words suggests that He in reality is the host, and that those who partake are His guests. The sense of guest fellowship with one another and with the Lord presiding was keen and vivid among the early Christians. In those days, indeed, 'common meals implied union in a degree which we do not readily imagine'.[1]

Finally it is important constantly to bear in mind the purpose with which this whole section on the Lord's Supper is introduced into St Paul's letter. The Apostle's motive in bringing up the subject is clearly to correct certain abuses in conduct on the part of the Corinthian Christians. Some of them had been rash enough to accept invitations to dine with friends in connexion with a pagan cult and thereby to countenance idolatry and at all events to scandalize their fellow-Christians. Others had come to the Lord's Supper itself without due preparation and so had eaten the bread and drunk the cup of the Lord unworthily: some indeed had been guilty of outrageous irreverence. St Paul urges all these to be and to behave as befits persons privileged to take part in so holy a service. 'Our passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ: wherefore let us keep the feast,[2] not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with

[1] A. D. Nock, *op. cit.* 125. Mr Nock adds, 'and such meals in honour of the dead are still held in modern Greece and elsewhere'.

[2] Here, as the context shews, St Paul is not referring particularly to the Lord's Supper, but to the Christian life as a whole, under the metaphor of a festival (cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* viii: '*All his* (i.e. the Christian's) *life is a holy festival*').

the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth' (1 Cor. v, 5–7).

NOTE 1. *On the different traditions in the early Church with regard to the Institution of the Lord's Supper*

Read and compare carefully: Mk. xiv, 17–26; Mt. xxvi, 20–30; Lk. xxii, 14–38; 1 Cor. xi, 23–25

It is uncertain what was the original text of St Luke in this passage. The full text as read in the R.V. is given in the authorities called by Westcott and Hort 'Neutral'. These authorities, it is now generally agreed, give us what was the true text in the view of the great Alexandrian scholar Origen at the beginning of the third century A.D.

Another type of text, still generally referred to by the name Westcott and Hort gave to it as the 'Western' text, though it has since been discovered that it was apparently the common text read in earlier times both in the East and in the West, gives us here a shorter reading. In point of fact the 'Western' manuscripts are divided. The majority stop at the word 'body' in *v.* 19 and omit *v.* 20. Others put *v.* 19 before *v.* 17. Perhaps in the original text as written by St Luke both *vv.* 19 and 20 were wanting. We might then connect the omission here with the fact that in the Acts St Luke speaks of 'the breaking of the bread' as the fellowship-meal of the early Christians without giving the slightest hint of any connexion between it and the Last Supper.

But, however that may be, some early authorities, as represented by the majority of the 'Western' manuscripts, place the giving of the cup (without the words 'This is my

blood') before the breaking of the bread with the words 'This is my body'.[1] And if the meal was not really the Passover meal but rather 'a Kiddush' of the kind commonly held in a Jewish house on the return of the family from the synagogue on the Sabbath evening, then the cup would naturally have preceded the bread.

Thus there are at least two early traditions as to the order of the meal: and by comparing all the four accounts given in the New Testament it will be seen that there is considerable doubt as to the exact words spoken by our Lord.

In particular the question arises as to whether or not He expressly directed the repetition of what then took place. Scholars are agreed that the words 'Do this with a view to recalling me' belong to the true text only in 1 Cor. xi, 24, 25.

How are we to explain the fact that they are wanting in the three Synoptic Gospels?

Must we suppose that when St Paul says that he received his own account 'from the Lord' he means partly from the Lord through His earlier disciples and partly from the Lord without such intermediaries: and that it was St Paul himself who inserted the words 'do this with a view to recalling me' because he had come to believe that that was the Lord's intention and felt that what he was convinced was implicit in the tradition he had received ought to be made explicit?

[1] This order occurs again in the *Didache* and is rather suggested by 1 Cor. x, 16.

Note 2. *The Christian rites and 'the Mysteries'*

It will have been noticed that Baptism, especially according to St Paul's conception of it as the drama of the passing of the convert from the old life to the new, and the Eucharist, with its dramatic re-enactment of the Last Supper, itself a dramatic presentation of the Crucifixion, belong to that type of religious observance of which the 'Mystery Religions' give us other instances.

In the secret rites of the Mystery Religions the votary recapitulated the experience of his lord and in so doing obtained the sense of blessed communion with him and the promise of, one day, entering into his crowning experience, the experience of immortality. Christian Baptism is not a secret rite: otherwise in St Paul's conception of it it is almost an exact parallel.

In the 'Mystery' rites the details are uncertain: sacred objects were shewn to the initiates, possibly they partook of food. But so far as we know such items were subordinated to the action of the drama as a whole. It was regarded as a whole, a whole reproducing the experience of the cult lord.

The Christian rites of Baptism and the Lord's Supper were to St Paul and his converts similar dramatic wholes. The water, or the formula of baptism, was not isolated from the rest of the rite and given a magical or quasi-magical value in itself: nor was the bread or the wine or even the repetition of the Lord's own words in the Eucharist.

Are we to suppose, then, that the Apostle was deliberately

copying these heathen 'Mysteries'? St Paul was and remained too much of a Jew for this to be probable. The actual mysteries of the pagans he no doubt viewed with profound disapproval as Philo did.[1]

But while each particular 'mystery' had its own peculiar details the general idea shared by them all had to a very considerable extent passed into the common stock of religious thought to which reference was made in Chapter IV. Certainly words like 'mysterion', 'teleios', had become part of the ordinary vocabulary of religion.[2]

St Paul always felt himself to be the Apostle of the Gentiles and he was far too keen and efficient a missionary not to pay some attention to, and have a certain sympathy with, the thought of the men and women whom he wished to reach. Judaism itself gave him a starting point for religious rites of a dramatic kind, especially in the festival of the Passover: and the Christian institutions of Baptism and the Lord's Supper were already to hand when he became a Christian. It was not difficult for him to see in these simple and beautiful observances just the very thing that would appeal to the Gentiles, just the very thing that, in the providence of GOD, they had been prepared by the general current of religious thought to receive and welcome.

It would be still more natural for St Paul's converts themselves to view the Christian religion as the newest and

[1] Philo is very emphatic in his denunciation. See especially *De spec. leg.* I, 319.

[2] It is worth noting that no Christian writer before Clement of Alexandria uses the word 'mysterion' of the Sacraments.

the best of the Mysteries. Obviously it had superiority over all the others and that at least in three respects.

(1) First, the Lord was not a mythical figure but a real person the memory of whose nobility and goodness was alive among His followers.

(2) Secondly, there was a better theory of His death than of the death of any of the cult deities of the pagans. For their deaths no reason was suggested at all. The Lord's death was vicarious: it was part of GOD's purpose and plan: it was 'according to the Scriptures': it was for the saving of the world.

(3) And thirdly, in the Christian religion as in no other, rites were indissolubly bound up with morals. Unless the votary accepted the moral standard (and there was no higher standard than that set in the Christian religion) he was offered no comfort from the liturgical performances.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

THE ADMISSION OF THE GENTILES AND THE FURTHER EXPANSION OF THE CHURCH

WHILE St Paul was in retirement in Arabia an important developement had taken place at Antioch. It was there that systematic missionary work among the Gentiles was first undertaken. Men of Cyprus and Cyrene were the pioneers in this work, 'And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord' (Acts xi, 20, 21).

The Church at Jerusalem, which evidently did not regard St Peter's baptism of Cornelius as a sufficient precedent for the evangelization of the Gentiles on a large scale, sent one of the most respected of their number, Barnabas, himself both a Levite and a Cypriot (iv, 36) to inspect the work at Antioch. Barnabas found nothing to object to, 'for he was a good man'—a kind and sensible man—full of Holy Spirit and of faith (xi, 24). He encouraged the Christians, Jew and Gentile alike, to 'cleave unto the Lord' 'with purpose of heart' (*v.* 23) and himself brought a new recruit from Tarsus to help forward the missionary campaign in the person of St Paul. St Paul, after coming out of his retirement, had proved himself to be a stout and able defender of the faith in the synagogues at Damascus till he had been hounded out of the city by his former allies. After a short visit to Jerusalem, where the enmity of the Jews still dogged his footsteps, he had found

his way to Tarsus his native city. Perhaps it was on the occasion of this visit to Jerusalem that he realized that his future work would be among the Gentiles (xxii, 17).

At any rate Barnabas seems to have had no difficulty in persuading him to come to Antioch, and there the two friends worked as colleagues for a whole year, 'and taught much people' (xi, 26). Their work prospered so much that the populace of the city found it worth while to invent for the members of the growing society one of the nicknames for which they were famous in antiquity. From the word 'Christos' 'anointed', the real origin and associations of which they would be ignorant of, they called the disciples 'Christians'; and the name stuck.

It is at this point that St Luke records an incident which illustrates the friendly relations subsisting between the Church at Antioch and the Mother Church at Jerusalem. A Christian prophet from Jerusalem had foretold a famine, meaning thereby, apparently, a period of general scarcity. Perhaps his fears may have had special reference to Jerusalem, though St Luke does not say so. In any case it would not be an inference difficult to draw that such a famine would be particularly serious for the Christian community in Jerusalem with its numerous dependents. Thus the Christians at Antioch determined to organize relief for their brethren.

The famine occurred some time after the death of Herod Agrippa, probably about A.D. 46. Barnabas and Paul were sent as bearers of the contribution from the Church of Antioch. This is therefore, according to St Luke's account, the second visit of St Paul to Jerusalem since his conversion.

In that case it would seem to correspond with the visit of which St Paul himself speaks in the second chapter of his Epistle to the Galatians. If so, questions concerning the conditions under which Gentiles should be admitted to the Church were informally discussed (Gal. ii, 2).

The circumcision of Titus, a young man who had accompanied Barnabas and Paul to Jerusalem, was a test case. Should Titus who was a Gentile be compelled to undergo circumcision, i.e. to become a Jew, as a condition of his admission into membership of the Church? It is not clear from St Paul's language whether Titus was or was not eventually circumcized. But what St Paul states quite definitely is that no compulsion was put upon Titus in the matter (ii, 3); and that every encouragement was given to himself and Barnabas to go on with the good work of winning the Gentiles to the faith (ii, 9).

The identification of the second visit mentioned in Acts with that referred to in Gal. ii is by no means certain, but it facilitates the chronology of St Paul's movements, and the objections sometimes urged against it do not seem to be serious. If systematic ingathering of the Gentiles had already for a year or more been in progress at Antioch such questions must necessarily have arisen: and they were questions of difficulty and delicacy which would probably have had to be often discussed both privately and publicly before a proper settlement of them could be arrived at.

On the other hand, it is possible that in Gal. ii St Paul is really referring, as Bishop Lightfoot thought, to the visit described by St Luke in Acts xv, when the question was

considered by the whole Church of Jerusalem and a decision reached and formulated.[1]

The first of these suggested solutions however appears on the whole to be freest of difficulty, and it is accepted by a large number, if not the majority, of modern scholars. For our present purpose it makes no material difference whichever solution we prefer: but for the sake of clearness we shall provisionally accept that which, on the whole, appears to be the safest, viz. the first. On this view it was with the encouragement of the leading Christians at Jerusalem that Barnabas and Paul returned to the work at Antioch. That encouragement may, indeed, have had something to do with the wider enterprise upon which the two missionaries soon embarked. They were commissioned by the Church at Antioch to go on a missionary tour into Cyprus and Asia Minor.

It does not fall within the scope of our present story to follow St Paul from place to place upon this tour or upon the two subsequent tours which are described in the Acts. But we must endeavour to understand the general principles and methods of his work.

'To the Jew first and also to the Greek',[2]—the words are the Apostle's and might well be taken as a motto for a chapter describing the missionary work recorded in the Acts.

[1] Or even that Acts xi, xv and Gal. ii all really refer to the same visit. If we adopt this last suggestion we must of course admit that there is some little confusion in St Luke's narrative; but at the worst the degree of the confusion involved is only slight: for of the visit mentioned in Acts xi St Luke tells us almost nothing.

[2] Rom. ii, 10.

In all the great cities were to be found settlements of foreign traders: the separate nationalities generally in separate quarters; and among them we must reckon the Jews. Every such Jewish quarter would normally contain one or more synagogues where Sabbath by Sabbath the Jews assembled for prayer and above all to hear the reading and exposition of the Scriptures, i.e. of course, the Old Testament. Any competent person might give the exposition, and it was a very common practice to invite a distinguished stranger to do so.

Now it is clear from what St Luke tells us in the Acts that St Paul adopted a definite plan of campaign and that his plan was somewhat as follows: keeping generally to one of the great Roman roads, he would make for a city containing a Jewish settlement, paying as a rule little attention to the smaller places and the countryside through which he passed; he would then as soon as possible after his arrival get into touch with the synagogue.

The next step would depend upon the authorities of the synagogue and generally they would be very glad to invite St Paul to preach. The Apostle, indeed, was by early training particularly well qualified to do so. St Luke gives us the outline of his sermon in the synagogue at Antioch, intending, no doubt, that it should be regarded as a typical sermon to a synagogue audience (Acts xiii, 16–41).

St Paul begins by reminding his hearers at some length of the special care God has in the past shewn for His people Israel. He then goes on to say that now at last God has sent the promised Messiah in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, proving Him to be Messiah by raising Him

from the dead. All the blessings, therefore, associated with the Messianic salvation are now available through Jesus.

Such an address would naturally arouse the interest of such an audience, and would commonly be followed by others in which the preacher would develope and explain subjects upon which he had only been able to touch in his first sermon, e.g. the reason for the Crucifixion.

Now, as we have already seen, St Paul had adopted a position similar to that of St Stephen with regard to the Mosaic Law; and sooner or later this fact would become plain to his hearers. Their Jewish prejudices would then be aroused, and the withdrawal, if not the expulsion, of the Apostle from the synagogue would follow as a matter of course.

But, generally speaking, he would not depart alone. For in most Jewish synagogues in the great cities of the Empire were to be found Gentiles to whom the lofty monotheism and the high moral standard of Judaism had made a strong appeal. In Acts such persons are spoken of as 'god-fearers' (*sebomenoi*). They were not, strictly-speaking, proselytes: few of them, probably, had any definite intention of being circumcized and becoming proselytes proper. But they had to some extent, if more or less loosely, attached themselves to the synagogue: and no doubt the synagogue authorities were glad of their support and cherished hopes of winning them eventually as complete adherents.

To such persons St Paul's preaching must have been particularly attractive; and most attractive of all just at the point where it became offensive to the Jews themselves.

A monotheism which, while retaining a high ethical standard, offered, instead of a set of singularly awkward ritual regulations, a redeemer superior to all the redeemer-gods of the mystery religions in that He was a real historical person concerning whom the preacher himself gave a glowing personal testimony—such a monotheism had more than all the merits of Judaism without its disadvantages.

It is not to be wondered at that the 'god-fearers' in large numbers left the synagogue with St Paul, and that the Jewish authorities were often mad with jealousy at the way in which the new preacher had out-bid them.

St Paul's next step, in such circumstances, would usually be to find another centre for his work and to gather his new friends around it and build them up into a little society. Other Gentiles would be attracted, and some who had had no previous connexion with Judaism. To these, no doubt, the Gospel appealed as the good news of a new and superior mystery religion: and we know enough of St Paul to feel sure that he made the Christian rites of Baptism and the Lord's Supper the vehicles of the kind of instruction which such hearers had been prepared by their previous experience to understand. Indeed in his Epistles, as we have already seen, we have proof that he did so.

St Luke himself gives us no specimen of St Paul's preaching to a purely Gentile audience, except a very brief outline of his speech at Athens, and a sentence or two summarizing his remonstrance with the pagan crowd at Lystra which was attempting to worship him and Barnabas. The former, however, at least suggests that St Paul was well aware that Stoicism and the Gospel had considerable

ground in common; and also that he laid great stress on Ethics and on the fact that the Christian redeemer had been appointed to be judge of mankind. And both these suggestions receive ample confirmation from St Paul's own writings.

As it happens, this is not the side of missionary work which is of special interest to St Luke. It is clear that, for instance, St Paul's eighteen months at Corinth and his long stay at Ephesus must have been largely occupied by work of this kind among the Gentiles. But though St Luke tells us that both at Corinth and at Ephesus it was not long before St Paul had to retire from the synagogue, in the one case to a private house and in the other to a lecture-room (free, according to one ancient reading,[1] only in the afternoons), he gives us little further detail.

What St Luke is concerned to shew, is, rather, first that the Jews were always given the first opportunity of hearing the Gospel and their exclusion from the new Israel of God was therefore their own doing; and secondly that there was nothing in the preaching of the Gospel to which the Romans could reasonably object, the actual fact being that the officials, who, like Gallio and Festus, really knew their duty, had not shewn the least hostility to it. Educated persons therefore like Theophilus, for whose special benefit St Luke's history was written, need have no misgivings about the Church either on the ground that it was not the true successor to the Church of the Old Testament or on the ground that it involved disloyalty to the Roman

[1] The reading of the 'Western' text (Acts xix, 9).

government. It is plain that St Luke wishes to lay stress on both these points.

But we must return to the missionaries themselves. It is clear that while in some places their labour bore little fruit, in other places, notably at Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth, and Ephesus, they left behind them strong and flourishing societies. In the meantime the problem of the terms on which Gentiles should be admitted into membership of the Church had come to a head (Acts xv, and cf. Gal. ii, 1–14).

The opinion that circumcision was necessary to salvation found many advocates, especially in Jerusalem and among the Pharisees who had become Christians. It seems as if a party was formed which actually sent emissaries to correct the preaching of St Paul not only in Antioch, but among the Galatians. Who these Galatians were is not quite certain, and for our purpose the question is immaterial. But again it will conduce to clearness if we make a provisional choice among the possibilities open to us. We shall therefore follow what appears on the whole to be the easier and safer theory and suppose that the term refers to the inhabitants of the southern part of the Roman province of Galatia to whom Barnabas and St Paul preached on their first missionary journey. We shall further suppose, with the support of probably the majority of modern scholars (at any rate in Great Britain), that St Paul wrote his letter to these Christians not long after his return from visiting them. The emissaries from James of whom he speaks (Gal. ii, 12) may then be identified with 'certain men from Judæa' mentioned by St Luke (Acts xv, 1).

These men gave rise to much disputing at Antioch and in particular made trouble about meals in which Jewish and Gentile Christians ate together. This eating of Jews with Gentiles had indeed been a point which had all along[1] exercised the minds of the stricter Jewish Christians.

The final upshot of the contentions on these matters was a conference at Jerusalem where the whole problem was gone into; and, according to St Luke's account, in an atmosphere of general friendliness a solution was soon arrived at.

The main principle for which St Paul and his friends contended was undoubtedly conceded. Whether the famous decree (Acts xv, 19, 20: 28, 29) represents a compromise on minor points or not is a matter of little importance. The evidence, on the whole, however, seems to be distinctly in favour of the former alternative. In that case we may take it that it was decided, in order to facilitate the intercourse between Gentile and Jewish Christians, to direct the former to abstain from eating meat from which the blood had not been drained and meat that had been offered to an idol. It was felt desirable also at the same time to add an express warning against fornication, a practice not sufficiently condemned by the pagan teachers and even connected with some forms of pagan worship.

It must be admitted that, whatever interpretation be put upon it, the decree reads somewhat strangely. And as the regulation was definitely intended in the first instance for the Churches of Syria and Cilicia (*v.* 23),[2] it is not sur-

[1] Cf. Acts xi, 3.

[2] Though St Luke notes that it was actually delivered to the Churches of Southern Galatia also (Acts xvi, 4).

prising that when St Paul had to deal with similar problems under different conditions and in a different area, he preferred not to fall back upon the decree but to argue from first principles.

It is not improbable, moreover, that St Luke himself loses sight to some extent of the limitation of the scope of the decree, and thinks of the conference as a body making a permanent regulation for the whole Church.

In any case, however, the precedent now established was a precedent of the utmost importance for the Church's future, and St Luke is essentially justified in giving it a position of prominence in the very centre of his history.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

THE TRANSMUTATION OF FIRST HOPES

CHRISTIANITY was born in a country which was fuller than any other of eschatological hopes, that is of hopes of a great interposition of GOD which should bring the present age to an end and usher in a better. Visions of a vast upheaval often including tremendous disturbances of nature, lightnings, thunders, earthquakes, shooting stars, auroral colours, portents, all terrifying and aimed at the wicked, floated wildly before the eyes of dreamers like the author of 'the Assumption of Moses'.[1] During the seventy years before the fall of Jerusalem demagogues and fanatics were continually rising up and trying to excite the peasantry. Josephus the historian gives us some of their names, and there must have been many more whose efforts were too insignificant for him to notice. The impression he leaves with us is that unsettlement rapidly increased after the death of Herod Agrippa I in A.D. 44. The procurators who followed him were, with one or two exceptions like the honest Festus, a poor set of men, arrogant and ineffective. The country gradually got out of hand until the rebellion of A.D. 66–70 was the result.

All this time there can be little doubt that the phrase 'the kingdom of God' was in Jewish minds closely associated with eschatological expectations of a signal intervention of God which should bring the present order

[1] A Palestinian pamphlet to be dated probably about A.D. 6.

of things to an end and set up a new age in which GOD's sovereignty would be actually realized upon earth. In this Kingdom of GOD, GOD's anointed, the Messiah, would reign as King.

Now, as we have already seen, the first belief entertained by the disciples about Jesus was that He was Himself this Messiah, already anointed in heaven but not yet manifested as King upon earth. In due time, at the moment foreordained by GOD, He would actually return as King in all the pomp and circumstance of royalty. And the disciples believed that that moment was close at hand.

In Jerusalem itself they seem to have lived in daily expectation of their Lord's return, and to have thought of no provision for the future. Their capital, they supposed, would last out the old order: and under the new King everything would be changed.

According to the Gospels Jesus Himself had emphasized the central idea in the eschatological hope, the idea of the sovereignty of GOD manifested upon earth, and had encouraged belief in the closeness of its manifestation. He had used the imagery already associated in Jewish minds with this manifestation. Even the scene of the Great Assize, in Mt. xxv, 31–46, is not a new scene, but exactly, so far as the stage and its appointments are concerned, the scene popularly imagined in connexion with that great event, and depicted for example in the Book of Enoch. It is the meaning of it that Jesus transforms. Those who are commended are no longer (as in Jewish eschatological literature) persons who have punctiliously observed the Jewish Law, nor are the oppressors (like the Romans)

of the chosen people those who are condemned. The blessed are those who have shewn true human kindness to their fellow men: the cursed are those who have not.

But in spite of the change of emphasis introduced by Jesus, we still find His disciples after His death taking the eschatological appurtenances of Jewish expectation very seriously and literally.

Their attitude is represented by the question associated in Christian tradition with Ascension Day, 'Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?' (Acts i, 6). St Luke himself belongs to a later generation and it is clear that his own belief is expressed in the reply, 'It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority' (Acts i, 7).[1]

It was among those Christians who were Jews or those who had been '*sebomenoi*', adherents to Judaism, before they had become Christians, that these eschatological hopes were most widely entertained. Thus it is at Thessalonica where the bulk of the Christian society consisted of these '*sebomenoi*' (Acts xvii, 4) that we hear of eschatological frenzy giving rise to serious problems. Our information comes from the two letters addressed to the Thessalonians by 'Paul, and Silvanus, and Timothy'.

In the first place we must notice that the Thessalonian Christians had been suffering active persecution: 'Ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judæa are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like

[1] Note also *v.* 11, 'this same Jesus, which was received up from you into heaven, shall so come'—not 'ye shall see him so come'.

things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews' (1 Thes. ii, 14).[1] It is, of course, only natural that under suffering the Christians should turn with more ardent expectation to the anticipation of future vindication and triumph.

Secondly, we observe that the special anxiety felt by the Thessalonians was not on their own account. They were disappointed that some of their number had died before the Lord had come, and therefore would not see Him in the flesh (1 Thes. iv, 13–16). The survivors, evidently holding a view of the relation between soul and body nearer the Hebrew view that man is 'an animated body' than the Greek view that he is 'an incarnated soul',[2] were afraid that their friends had sustained an irreparable loss.

The writers of the Epistle, however, hasten to re-assure them: so far from suffering loss 'the dead in Christ shall rise first' (1 Thes. iv, 16). It is worth while quoting their exact words, for they give us, as it were, a vignette of the Parousia (i.e. the coming) of Jesus, as it was conceived of at this time: 'the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we that are alive, that are left, shall together be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord' (1 Thes. iv, 16, 17).

Here the general background is still the background as

[1] Cf. also iii, 3, 4.

[2] See H. W. Robinson on 'Hebrew Psychology' in *The People and the Book* (ed. A. S. Peake), p. 362.

described in the later Jewish Apocalypses:[1] but the central hope is the hope of the presence of the Lord. The Thessalonians had not long been Christians and they were not at all mature or perfect Christians:[2] yet to set before their minds the highest degree of blessedness it was sufficient to say simply 'so shall we ever be with the Lord'.

If this is so it is evident that already the immediacy of the advent of the Lord is not of the very essence of their hope. If the moment of His coming is delayed they will learn to be patient (2 Thes. iii, 5).[3] Their own duty is plain. They must be on the alert, ever prepared, like a soldier on guard (1 Thes. v, 6, 8), keeping themselves fit and steady and in good training. So, and so only, will the expectation of the Lord's return remain keen and healthy and invigorating.

It would be difficult to find a better example of the gradual transmutation of the Christian hope of the future than that which took place in the case of St Paul himself. Right down to the end of his long stay at Ephesus (Acts xix, 10—in what is commonly called his third missionary journey) he seems to have assumed that he himself would be alive when the Lord returned to the earth. This is certainly the expectation of the writers of the Epistles to the Thessalonians of whom St Paul was at least one (1 Thes.

[1] I.e. books containing revelations, generally revelations concerning heaven or the future and especially concerning 'last things'. Cf. also the Jewish figure of 'the man of sin' found in 2 Thes. ii, 3–10.

[2] Note the warnings against impurity (1 Thes. iv, 3, 4), laziness (2 Thes. iii, 10), and so on.

[3] Cf. James v, 7.

iv, 15).[1] No change is observable in the passage in 1 Corinthians (an epistle written during this long stay in Ephesus), in which St Paul deals with the subject (1 Cor. xv).[2] Then came the severe affliction of which the Apostle speaks in 2 Corinthians (written some months later from Macedonia). 'We were weighed down exceedingly', he writes, 'beyond our power, insomuch that we despaired even of life: yea, we had the sentence of death within ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead' (2 Cor. i, 8, 9).

St Paul realized as never before the frailty of his body.[3] He recognized how easily the earthly house of his bodily frame might be dissolved, and reflected that to be absent from the body would be to be at home with the Lord, and that he would prefer to be with the Lord (2 Cor. v, 6–8). Here the alternative—that he might survive till the Lord's return to earth—is tacitly dismissed. And it is dismissed for good.

Thus when St Paul contemplates the possibility, on the one hand of being released from his imprisonment at Rome and re-visiting his friends at Philippi, and on the other of being put to death, he writes: 'I am in a strait betwixt the two, having the desire to depart and to be with Christ; for

[1] It is possible that, as Professor Burkitt has suggested (*Christian Beginnings*, pp. 130 ff.), these epistles were actually written by Silvanus: but at any rate St Paul agreed with their contents sufficiently to allow them to go out under his name. 1 Thes. i, 1, v, 27; 2 Thes. i, 1, iii, 17.

[2] Note especially *vv.* 51, 52.

[3] 'Our outward man is decaying,' 2 Cor. iv, 16.

it is very far better: yet to abide in the flesh is more needful for your sake' (Phil. i, 23, 24). And then he continues: 'And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide, yea, and abide with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith'. In any case the difference to himself is no great matter. For him 'to live is Christ, and to die is gain' (*v.* 21). And this for the Apostle is no new idea. In the Epistle, which, with a number of modern scholars, we have provisionally accepted as the earliest of his extant Epistles, the Epistle to the Galatians, what is essentially the same thought is already expressed: 'I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me' (Gal. ii, 20).

As we have already seen, mystical union with Christ is the foundation of all the Apostle's theology. But a theology built upon such a foundation has no place of first importance to give to the return of Christ to earth. And St Paul himself recognizes that this is so: 'even though we have known Christ after the flesh', he writes, 'yet now we know him so no more' (2 Cor. v, 16). The passage from the old to the new takes place at baptism, and so St Paul continues, 'Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away: behold, they are become new' (*v.* 17). The new life has begun already.

Similarly the phrase 'the kingdom of God' which, as we have seen, had an eschatological sound for Jewish ears, is very little used by St Paul. When he does use it, it is generally to emphasize the moral requirements connected with it (1 Cor. vi, 10). And in one famous passage he removes it entirely from eschatology: 'the kingdom of God',

he writes, 'is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost' (Rom. xiv, 17).

Thus we see eschatology as a whole gradually sinking into a subordinate place in Christian theology. We can trace the progress further in the Epistle to the Hebrews.[1] 'Ye are come', writes the author of this epistle—come already—'unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect...' (Heb. xii, 22, 23).

Of course, in times when persecution threatened it was only natural for interest in the doctrine of 'last things' to revive. Thus the author of the first epistle of St Peter assures his readers upon whom 'a fiery trial' is coming that 'the end of all things is at hand' (1 Pet. iv, 7, 12).

And it was severe persecution in Asia Minor, probably in the time of the Emperor Domitian,[2] which called forth the burning eschatology of the Revelation of St John the Divine: 'I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations.... And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus' (Rev. xvii, 3 ff.).

[1] See below, Chapter x.

[2] A.D. 81–96.

The woman is the great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth (*v.* 18), i.e. of course, Rome.[1]

And an angel cried with a mighty voice, Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, and is become a habitation of devils, and a hold of every unclean spirit, and a hold of every unclean and hateful bird (xviii, 1, 2). The kings of the earth... shall weep and wail over her, when they look upon the smoke of her burning, standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! for in one hour is thy judgement come (*vv.* 9, 10). And the merchants of the earth...cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and mourning, saying, Woe, woe, the great city, wherein were made rich all that had their ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate. Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye saints, and ye apostles, and ye prophets; for God hath judged your judgement on her (*vv.* 11, 19, 20).

But even here there is one great thought which finally swallows up all expectations concerned with time and space, the thought of the eternal reality of the new Jerusalem already prepared in heaven (xxi, 1 ff.) 'And he that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new' (*v.* 5). To the lonely exile on the island of Patmos it is as good as done.

The process by which eschatological expectations are relegated into the background of Christian thought in normal times reaches its final stage in the Johannine writings.

Here the central idea is the idea of eternal life, life which

[1] All readers of such a writing as this, at the time, would know that 'Babylon' meant 'Rome'.

is of such a quality that it belongs in reality not to the world of time and space but to the eternal world. The Christian when he becomes a Christian enters into this life. It begins at once and is never really interrupted, not even by death.

No doubt the early tradition of Christ's return to earth is not entirely discarded (Jn. v, 28; 1 Jn. ii, 18). And if a time limit is thought of at all it is the limit suggested by such a phrase as that of St Luke, 'until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled' (Lk. xxi, 24), or by this sentence from St Matthew's Gospel, 'this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations; and then shall the end come' (Mt. xxiv, 14).

But the futility of speculation as to the date is realized more and more: 'of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father' (Mk. xiii, 32; Mt. xxiv, 36). And in the Fourth Gospel, and in the epistles which bear the name of John, the question is hardly raised. Here we are brought rather to dwell upon the eternal realities existing now and for ever: *God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath the life* (1 Jn. v, 12). *And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever* (1 Jn. ii, 17).

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CHAPTER NINE

THE DAILY LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN

(Rom. xii and xiii; 1 Cor. xiii; Ephes. v, 22–vi, 9; Phil. iv; Col. iii, 18–25)

LET us try to picture a Christian family living say at Ephesus about A.D. 60. There were as yet few Christians among the upper classes.[1] We will suppose that the father of the family is a merchant in a small way of business and that his household consists of his wife and children and two or three slaves. The first thing we notice about him is that he pays attention to his business (Rom. xii, 11) and looks and behaves like an honourable man (*v.* 17). He is kind-hearted (*vv.* 14, 15), and ready to do anyone a good turn (*vv.* 18–21). He is law-abiding (xiii, 1–7), and pays his debts (xiii, 8). He does not push himself forward (xii, 16). He is clean minded (Phil. iv, 8), cheerful (1 Thes. v, 17), and considerate (Phil. iv, 5).

He and his wife are devoted to one another (Ephes. v, 25 ff.; 1 Pet. iii, 7). They do not fuss the children and their children look up to them (Col. iii, 21). They recognize their slaves who, we will suppose, are also Christians, as more than slaves, as 'brothers beloved' (Philemon 16); and the slaves do not take advantage of their kindness but do their work with a will (Ephes. vi, 6).

All the members of the family realize that they each have membership in the larger family, 'the brotherhood' (1 Pet. ii, 17), the Christian Church. The very word 'church'

[1] 1 Cor. i, 26.

(*ecclesia*) as used by the Christians is itself suggestive. It is the word used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament for the Hebrew word which denotes 'the assembly of Israel' thought of as the chosen people of GOD; and the use of the word by the Christians suggests that they regard their society as the true successor of Israel of old (cf. Mt. xxi, 43) and as being GOD's chosen assembly.

There are by this time churches of GOD (1 Thes. ii, 14, etc.) in many places, the local representatives of the Church, i.e. the whole body of Christians in the world (1 Cor. xii, 28; Ephes. i, 22; Phil. iii, 6; Col. i, 18, 24, etc.).

Again and again St Paul compares the Church, this one unified society, to a human body of which the limbs represent the individual Christians and the head represents Christ (1 Cor. xii, 12–31; Ephes. iv, 4–16).

No other figure brings out so well the relation of the members to one another and to Him. They have each a function to perform in the service of all: they have living fellowship with each other, 'fellowship of the Spirit' (Phil. ii, 1), the Spirit of GOD (which is the Spirit of Christ) being in communion with each human spirit and bringing all together to make one 'holy temple', 'for a habitation of God in the Spirit' (Ephes. ii, 22).

The Church is the home of the Spirit and here, under the rule of Christ, Christians are safe from all their fears, fears of fate, of chance, of demons, all the fears which haunt the pagan world: safe and free, delivered from the tyranny of the flesh and free from the burden of Jewish legalism: safe through possessing, and being possessed by, the Spirit.

Special manifestations of the Spirit's power were looked for in connexion with the healing of the sick, inspired utterance in Christian meetings, visions, personal guidance in difficulty, and so on. The earliest accounts of such things which have come down to us are found in St Paul's Epistles and in those sections of the Acts which are written in the first person plural and evidently based on the observations of an eye-witness (Acts xvi, 10–18; xx, 5–26; xxvii–xxviii, 16).

The instances of healing given in these 'We' sections, as they are often called, are the restoration to soundness of mind of the poor girl at Philippi (xvi, 18), the quick recovery of Eutychus from a fall at Troas (xx, 10), and the relief of an old man's dysentery in the island of Melita (xxviii, 8), together with certain healings unspecified (*v.* 9). Of these the first and the third are to be attributed to the power of mind over body, the mind being the mind of a man (St Paul) highly charged with personal magnetism and keyed up to a condition of religious exaltation. The second illustrates the Apostle's collectedness in emergency. Eutychus was taken up unconscious. The bystanders thought him dead and saw in St Paul's action a parallel to Elijah's (1 Kings xvii, 21) and Elisha's (2 Kings iv, 34). But he was not really dead and he soon came round. Another example of St Paul's coolness at a critical moment occurred at Melita, when a viper from a bundle of sticks laid upon a newly-kindled fire fastened on his hand. The Apostle did not lose his head. He was able after a few moments to shake off 'the beast into the fire', and took no harm. The narrative does not say that he was actually bitten.

Thus, partly owing to the remarkable personalities and powers of what we should now perhaps call 'suggestion', possessed by such leaders as St Paul, through which certain cures (no doubt of functional rather than organic disorders) were really effected: and partly owing to deliverances which we should now term providential[1] rather than miraculous: some Apostles came to have a reputation for 'mighty works' (2 Cor. xii, 12), and this reputation itself helped them to further successes. No doubt the accounts of their doings gradually got magnified in the telling. In pre-scientific days people found marvels easy to believe. Tacitus speaks of the curing of the blind and the lame by the Emperor Vespasian: and so on. The Christians were no more, and probably a good deal less, credulous than their heathen neighbours.

And not only had a number of remarkable cures actually occurred, but also, what was still more important, there was to be taken into account many a miracle of changed life. The Lord Himself had deliberately gone to tax-gatherers and sinners, and His followers continued to make converts from among the disreputable. In 1 Cor. vi, 9, 10 St Paul enumerates various types of the unrighteous, and then goes on: 'And such were some of you: but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God' (*v.* 11). Probably their success among the less respectable was partly responsible for the low opinion in which the Christians were held by the educated classes.

[1] Believing that the providence of God lies behind and in the whole course of the events of our life.

Moreover, where rescue work of this kind is going on, there is often the danger of emotional and other extravagances. The Salvation Army find it so today, as John Wesley did in the eighteenth century. In an entry in his journal dated Monday, April 3rd, 1786, he gives several instances:

> Frequently three or four, yea, ten or twelve, pray aloud altogether. Some of them, perhaps many, scream altogether as loud as they possibly can.... Several drop down as dead, and are as stiff as a corpse. But in a while they start up, and cry Glory! Glory! perhaps twenty times together.

Wesley is very patient with them: 'Whenever we reprove them', he says, 'it should be in the most mild and gentle manner possible'. St Paul took up a rather similar attitude with regard to the rather similar abnormalities among his converts.

'Speaking with tongues', that is being worked up in a kind of ecstasy and uttering sounds which had no meaning for anyone but the speaker, was valued by the Christians. The pagans too were impressed in like manner by the utterances of their Sibyls or oracles. All these were commonly accepted as evidence of the presence of some supernatural spiritual power. It was because the Christians held that the ecstatic utterances which they heard in their gatherings were an indication of the presence of the Spirit of GOD that they set such store by them (1 Cor. xiv, 5).

So also did they value visions. Thus, it was when he was 'in the Spirit on the Lord's day' that St John the Divine received his revelation (Rev. i, 10): and St Paul's visions

were numerous (2 Cor. xii, 1; Acts xvi, 9, xxvii, 23, 24, etc.). Divine guidance seemed sometimes to come through such a vision. So, after recording St Paul's famous vision of the man of Macedonia, St Luke goes on to say, 'And when he had seen the vision, straightway we sought to go forth into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us for to preach the Gospel unto them' (Acts xvi, 10). What a cheerful and courageous loyalty breathes in such words! It is noteworthy also that, apart from such visions, St Luke regards the movements of Paul and Silas as directed and controlled by 'the Spirit of Jesus' (Acts xvi, 7).

But we must return from such special manifestations of the Spirit's power to the normal life of the Christian society. It will be convenient to consider first the local ecclesia, and then the Ecclesia proper, i.e. the Whole.

The local ecclesia, the local branch of the Christian society, would meet in the house of one of its members.[1] A tiny but fascinating picture is given in the Acts of such a meeting at Troas at which the writer himself was present (Acts xx, 7–12). It was on the first day of the week that the Christians 'gathered together to break bread': evidently in the evening. The order of proceedings seems to have been a discourse (in this instance a very long one) followed by the fellowship meal and social intercourse (*v.* 11). There is a delightful simplicity and family feeling about the whole gathering. No doubt there was prayer; and, if not on that then on other occasions, the reading of the Old Testament. Letters from the Apostles and other Christian leaders soon

[1] In a large city like Ephesus after a time there must have been several such meeting places.

came to be read too, and sayings of the Lord would be quoted[1] and stories about Him told and re-told. Sometimes, when a question of unusual importance arose or a new enterprise was to be undertaken, there would be a long meeting for prayer and fasting. It was after such a meeting of the Church at Antioch that Paul and Barnabas were solemnly commissioned by laying on of hands for their missionary work (Acts xiii, 3). Whose were the hands laid on the Apostles' heads we are not told. Evidently the action is regarded as the act of the whole community—the whole community as the organ of the Spirit—and it was accompanied by prayer.

Quite early it became usual to have a laying on of hands as a kind of complement to the rite of baptism (Acts viii, 15–17, xix, 5, 6), and not to expect the gift of the Spirit to become fully operative till this had taken place. In the cases mentioned the hands were the hands of St Paul or one of the other Apostles: but in the Acts no definite ruling is given on the point.

Distinct from these apostolic missionaries, who ministered to the whole society, were the *presbyters* or elders who managed the affairs of the local society. At Lystra, Iconium and Antioch in Pisidia these elders were appointed by Paul and Barnabas (Acts xiv, 23); and perhaps this represents the usual procedure, though, again, we have no explicit information.

Owing to the fact that 'over-seeing' was one of the functions of the elders, they were sometimes referred to as *episcopoi*, overseers, inspectors (e.g. Acts xx, 28, where the

[1] E.g. Acts xx, 35.

R.V. text reads 'bishops').[1] One of them, no doubt, would preside at the 'breaking of bread', and when such a presidency became a permanency, there in germ would be the bishop of later days. Moreover, when the original house-church in a city grew too large for any one house and other house-churches were formed from it, the senior presbyter of the original congregation would be looked up to by all the Christians in the city. Gradually his office would become more and more distinct and fixed till he was regarded as *the* episcopos of the place.

This developement took place quickly in some places, e.g. Asia Minor; slowly in others, e.g. Syria. James 'the eldest male of the Messianic House' held from the first a unique position of authority in Jerusalem resembling that of a Caliph almost as much as that of a bishop (in the later sense of the term).[2]

There were of course other duties connected with each church, particularly those relating to the care of the poor and to discipline. At the 'breaking of bread' it was customary to set aside portions for the poor and to raise contributions for them; and in the larger churches, at all events, this work of ministration was entrusted to ministrants, *deacons*, and eventually gave rise to a second set of officials whose duty it was to assist the presbyters in these and other respects.

[1] Those who saw the performance of the 'Birds' of Aristophanes at Cambridge a few years ago will remember the little *episcopos* (inspector of taxes) who came skipping upon the stage in a white hat.

[2] See B. H. Streeter, *The Primitive Church*, pp. 40, 73.

'The Church was an organism alive and growing—changing its organisation to meet changing needs...the system of government varied from church to church.... Uniformity was a later developement.'[1]

As to discipline: there was considerable need of it as there is still in the young churches of the Mission field.

In some of the great mass-movement Churches of India it was found necessary, for the honour of the Christian name, and in order to check the litigiousness of their members, not only to constitute Church courts, but to forbid any Christian, under pain of excommunication, to bring a suit before the public court, until the Church had first investigated the case, and granted permission—a permission which was rarely given. And tedious as the work often is, many a missionary has found it worth while to spend long hours with trusted representatives of the Church in judging of disputes between Christians, and, in that way, not only to settle such disputes, but to help to form Christian standards of morality.[2]

St Paul was faced with a very similar difficulty at Corinth (1 Cor. vi, 1–8).

Other difficulties arose owing to the influence of heathen environment with its lower ethical standards. The effect of the surrounding moral atmosphere tells in a subtle way, as missionaries still testify, even upon experienced Christians, and they have constantly to be on their guard against moral enervation and lassitude. Hence St Paul's frequent warnings against fornication. Moreover, it was felt that to go where idolatry was was to go out of that sphere where Christ ruled and protected His own, and so to incur spiritual danger and specially danger from the demons who lurked

[1] Streeter, *op. cit.* p. 261. [2] S. Cave, *op. cit.* p. 195.

behind the idols. Similarly Dr Cave records[1] that 'in the South India United Church in Travancore, the Indian members of Church Councils would insist on the suspension from Church membership of those who attended the marriage festivals, even of relatives who were Hindus, because there idolatrous rites would be practised, and so their souls imperilled'. How far one could safely go in social intercourse with one's heathen neighbours was often a difficult question. While St Paul deprecated overscrupulousness he laid down as a determining principle considerateness for others. 'If meat maketh my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore, that I make not my brother to stumble' (1 Cor. viii, 13; cf. Phil. iv, 5).

We must pass on to note the close connexion between the life of the local community and the life of the Church as a whole. Apostles were recognized as leaders of the whole Church and were welcome everywhere: and the term Apostle[2] includes not only the twelve and St Paul but James, Barnabas, and others (Rom. xvi, 7). Prophets too, that is persons who gave special evidence of being possessed by the Spirit, were similarly welcomed. And not

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 147.

[2] The Jews apparently used the term for the commissioners (men of standing and authority) who went from Jerusalem to collect the Temple tribute from the Jewish Dispersion and were in many ways an important link between this Dispersion and the capital. Similarly the Christian Apostles were a link between the Christian Dispersion and the Mother Church of Jerusalem (evidently so regarded in the Acts, and cf. Rom. xv, 25–27). See Harnack, *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums*, II, 314 ff. Eng. Tr. *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity*.

only that: the ordinary Christian was sure of the warmest and friendliest reception in any Christian society anywhere all over the world (Acts xxi, 3–6, xxviii,[1] 13–15).

Christians moving from one place to another regularly brought with them notes of introduction. What could be more sincere and beautiful than the following (one of St Paul's): 'I commend unto you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church that is at Cenchreae: that ye receive her in the Lord, worthily of the saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever matter she may have need of you: for she herself also hath been a succourer of many, and of mine own self' (Rom. xvi, 1, 2).

The local churches raised contributions not only for their own poor, and not only for their beloved Apostles (Phil. iv, 10, 11, 14–17), but for the poor in Jerusalem (Rom. xv, 26–28; 2 Cor. viii, ix). So wide was the interpretation given to the law of Christ, 'Bear ye one another's burdens' (Gal. vi, 2).

It must be added that, if the Christians were poor, they were not yet generally persecuted, at all events not on the large scale. The authorities took them to be a species of Jew, and Judaism was an allowed religion in the Empire. The Jews themselves were often hostile (Acts xiii, 45, 50, xiv, 4, 5, 19, xvii, 5, 13; 1 Thes. ii, 14, 15),[2] and in most

[1] Note that Apii Forum is forty, and Tres Tabernae thirty, miles from Rome.

[2] Suetonius' language about the expulsion of the Jews from Rome by the Emperor Claudius (Claudius xxv, 4), 'since the Jews constantly made tumults "impulsore Chresto"', suggests that these disturbances probably arose through conflicts connected with Christianity.

cities there were busybodies and a rabble who might from time to time trouble the meek.

In conclusion we turn back for a moment to the individual. 'The beginning of wisdom', said Epictetus the Stoic philosopher, 'is the finding of a standard.' The Christian had found a new standard of conduct, of thought and action, in Christ and His society; and with it a new motive, a new affection, a new enthusiasm, which shattered their mental and spiritual complexes and brought them inward freedom and peace—the glorious liberty of the children of God (Rom. viii, 21). No doubt they had their lapses and their faults. Their ideas were in many respects crude like their neighbours, and sometimes they slipped very disagreeably into priggishness. Yet taking them as a whole they give us the impression of patches of colour in a world now grown somewhat grey. Their earliest pictures in the catacombs at Rome do not belie them: all merry as they are with garlands and little cupids and birds of gay plumage.

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CHAPTER TEN

FROM ST PAUL TO ST JOHN: THE BEGINNINGS OF CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY

In the second half of the first century A.D. Christianity was beginning here and there to percolate into the upper classes of society. In A.D. 57 a courageous lady, Pomponia Graecina, the wife of Aulus Plautius, the first Roman general in Britain, was accused of 'foreign superstition'[1] and handed over to the judgement of her husband by whom she was acquitted. It is not improbable that this means that she was a Christian and that her husband connived at it.

Early in A.D. 96 the Emperor Domitian suddenly put to death his first cousin T. Flavius Clemens on the charge of atheism and Jewish superstition. Evidence has been collected to shew that his wife Domitilla was secretly an adherent to Christianity and that he himself was at least an inquirer; and it would seem that more than one aristocratic family were interesting themselves in the Christian religion.[2] Hence arose a demand for Christian literature for educated circles.

St Mark's Gospel may have appeared at Rome some years earlier[3] after the death of St Peter and been intended to preserve the stories he used to tell of the Lord's

[1] Tacitus, *Ann.* XIII, 32.
[2] Streeter, *The Four Gospels*, p. 535.
[3] Probably in the decade A.D. 60–70.

ministry in Galilee and of His final visit to Jerusalem. But this Gospel was written by someone who apparently thought in Aramaic or at all events was quite unfamiliar with the niceties of literary Greek.

It was St Luke who first addressed himself to the task of presenting a narrative of Christian origins in a style that would be attractive to persons of rank and culture. In his first volume, he shews how Jesus, in a life that realized the Greek ideal of the good-and-beautiful, revealed Himself as a world-saviour: and in his second, how the religion He founded started on its course as a world-religion. Incidentally he made it clear how right and indeed inevitable it had been that Christianity should supersede Judaism, and how from the point of view of the loyal Roman citizen there was nothing to be said against it.[1]

Now, as we saw in Chapter IV, the chief subjects in higher education were rhetoric and philosophy; and the questions which would interest educated people were such questions as these: Is Christianity one of a number of religions open to a wise man's choice, or is it *the* religion standing absolutely by itself? Who is Christ, and what kind of being is He? Two books in the New Testament are designed to answer these questions: the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the Fourth Gospel. St Paul himself had, as we shall see, been moving towards the answers which these books suggest.

Who the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews was GOD alone knows, as the great Alexandrian scholar Origen said. Up to the end of the nineteenth century scholars were

[1] See above, Chapter VII, p. 80.

agreed that the readers contemplated in the first instance were Jewish Christians. Much may still be said in support of the view that the purpose of the writer was to encourage those Christians in Palestine, and perhaps elsewhere, who, because they were of Jewish nationality when the Jewish rebellion was on the point of breaking out (A.D. 66), were tempted to throw in their lot again with their fellow countrymen. But to go back from Christianity to Judaism was (the Epistle insisted) not to be thought of. It would be to forsake the substance for the shadow. No: their eyes had been opened by faith to see the eternal realities, and this vision would strengthen and support them to endure whatever conflict and suffering might be before them.

Whether, however, the writer actually had such readers in view or not, his theme is clear, and he sets himself to develope it in the manner approved by the best rhetorical schools. His theme is the absoluteness of the Christian religion; and he brings out his point by exhibiting the contrast between Christianity and Judaism.

The text of his homily—for that is what the Epistle to the Hebrews really is, an early Christian homily beautifully composed and illuminated with illustrations obtained by reading into certain Old Testament passages[1] a subtle allegory—might have been taken from St Paul. St Paul had said 'we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal' (2 Cor. iv, 18), and he had referred to certain observances

[1] E.g. Ps. cx, 4; Gen. xiv, 18–20.

enjoined by the Jewish Law as 'a shadow of the things to come' (Col. ii, 17). These are the thoughts which the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews takes up and developes. In the law he too finds 'a shadow of the good things to come' (x, 1). All its regulations have to do with types of realities which themselves belong to the unseen and eternal world. His conception of that world has its roots in Plato's doctrine of 'ideas', according to which all objects in the visible world are appearances, copies, imperfect and faint many of them, of originals ('ideas' Plato called them) eternally existing in an immaterial and unseen world, which alone has absolute reality. All the procedure laid down in the Jewish Law is a mere reflexion from that ideal world where alone the true high-priesthood can be exercised and the true atonement made. Christ's high-priesthood is an eternal high-priesthood (vii, 17), His offering an eternal offering (x, 12), and the redemption effected by it eternal redemption (ix, 12). Faith is the power that apprehends these and all the other realities which abide. Whatever may be the succession of appearances in the here-and-now of space and time, these eternal unseen realities remain unshaken: and the faith that apprehends them is the secret of noble and courageous living (xi).

Evidently the writer has advanced far beyond the conception of Christ as a Jewish Messiah, however exalted. He is God's Son (i, 5), 'for whom are all things, and through whom are all things' (ii, 10), whom the angels worship (i, 6). Parallels to such language can, of course, be found in St Paul. While all Christians are children of God by adoption and through possessing the Spirit of God

(Rom. viii, 14–17), Christ has been declared to be the Son of God in a signal manner by His resurrection from the dead (Rom. i, 4)[1]; and that is above all what St Paul held Him to be (Gal. ii, 20, etc.). He is 'the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist' (Col. i, 15–17).[2] 'In the name of Jesus', every knee shall bow, 'of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth' (Phil. ii, 10).

But who then is Christ? Is He a superior arch-angel or a second god? Speculations about His person seem to have been rife among some of the Greek Christians, for example at Colossae.[3]

If St Paul and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews and the other Christian teachers had not all been deeply committed to Monotheism they would probably have found an easy though superficial definition of the nature of Christ. He would have been accepted simply as a god, by an obvious extension of the principle laid down by

[1] Some scholars have seen in an expression of this kind (cf. Acts ii, 36) a trace of a primitive view that Christ too was 'adopted' at His resurrection, or according to another theory at His baptism (see e.g. the 'Western' reading in Lk. iii, 22). It is clear, however, that St Paul himself did not hold that view. See especially Phil. ii, 6.

[2] Cf. also 1 Cor. viii, 6.

[3] Note especially the term '*pleroma*', (Col. i, 19, ii, 9), a speculative term which played a great part in the later theorizing of the so-called 'Gnostics'.

Aristotle:[1] 'If there exists in a state an individual so pre-eminent in virtue that neither the virtue nor political capacity of all the other citizens is comparable with his..., he should not be regarded as a member of the state at all. For he will be wronged if treated as an equal when he is thus unequal in virtue and political capacity. Such a man should be rated as a god among men'.

But the early Christians were too well grounded in the Monotheism of the later prophets of the Old Testament to use the term *god* in this way. St Paul indeed does say that before His coming into the world Christ already had the essential attributes of GOD,[2] and he applies to Christ passages from the Old Testament in which the word 'lord' occurs and refers to GOD, without any qualification.[3] To use a modern phrase: 'for St Paul Christ had the value of God'.[4] How to express this[5] and remain a Monotheist was

[1] *Politics* III, 13 (1284 *a*).

[2] 'Being in the form of God', Phil. ii, 6. In connexion with this famous passage it must be noted that 'It was an established habit of the Jewish mind to assert pre-existence of objects and of men who were specially representative of God'—Moses, the Temple, the Tabernacle, the heavenly Jerusalem, the Law, and the Sabbath (cf. the human personality, Ps. cxxxix, 15, 16), C. A. Scott, *Christianity according to St Paul*, p. 270. (Cambridge.)

[3] See C. A. Scott, *op. cit.* p. 253. Cf. Joel ii, 32 with Rom. x, 13; Is. xxviii, 16 with Rom. x, 11: and notice how phrases like 'call upon the name of the Lord' (1 Cor. i, 2), and 'the day of the Lord' (1 Thes. v, 2) are used with reference to Christ.

[4] C. A. Scott, *op. cit.* p. 277.

[5] With regard to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit see Note 1 at the end of the chapter. Less attention was paid to it, and its developement was slower.

the problem: and in truth the problem remains, and is likely to remain, still unsolved. Christian thought, however, has moved toward a solution,[1] and it is the aim of the rest of this chapter to trace that movement from St Paul to St John.

In the passage quoted above from the Epistle to the Colossians (i, 15–17) it will be noticed that St Paul speaks of Christ as the image of the invisible GOD (cf. 2 Cor. iv, 4) and as being GOD's agent in Creation: and this reminds us of the fine passage in which the divine Wisdom is personified in the book of Wisdom (vii): 'She that is the artificer of all things taught me, even wisdom....' 'For she is an effulgence from everlasting light, And an unspotted mirror of the working of God, And an image of his goodness'.

The very word 'effulgence', *radiance*,[2] is used together with 'image' in Heb. i, 2, 3: 'God...hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds; who being the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power....'[3]

[1] In certain circles, especially those which were strongly Jewish and conservative, this movement was greatly retarded and eventually took a rather different direction. Thus we get various kinds of 'Ebionites' who came to be regarded by the main body of Christians as heretics. On these see Bethune-Baker, *An Introduction to the Early History of Christian Doctrine*, Chapter v. (Methuen.)

[2] Not found in the Old Testament and only here in the Apocrypha.

[3] Wisdom vii, viii and Proverbs viii should be read in this connexion.

The developement of this conception of the divine Wisdom took place at a time when Hebrew thought was profoundly impressed with the unspeakable majesty of the Almighty and laid stress upon His transcendence, that is, His existing above and apart from the visible universe, not subject in any way to its limitations. Thus not even His name was to be mentioned; and in fact GOD is only referred to by periphrasis in the deeply religious history of 1 Maccabees. GOD then, in His absolute nature, being removed from the world, it was necessary somehow in thought to bring Him back into relation with it; and this was done poetically in Proverbs viii and the Book of Wisdom by personifying that divine attribute of Wisdom which is suggested by the order so plainly observable in creation: 'She reacheth from one end of the world to the other with full strength, And sweetly doth she order all that is' (Wisdom viii, 1).

A still more vivid realization of the ordering process actually operating in the world, due largely to Greek influence and to some extent the result of the remarkable scientific discoveries of men like Hipparchus of Nicaea (161–126 B.C.), who could foretell eclipses and calculate the length of the lunar month to within a second, led to a fuller developement and to a change of term. 'Wisdom', which can only be the name of an attribute, is replaced in the writings of the Jewish philosopher Philo by the term 'Logos', which may mean both 'Reason' and 'Word'. The 'Logos' of GOD may therefore be regarded, on the one hand, as a divine attribute, and, on the other hand, as something proceeding from GOD, going out and operating

in the world; as a word proceeds out of the mouth of a man. The conception of such a divine power immanent in the world and producing order, an order exhibited in Man as, so far, its highest expression, was developed by the Stoics and was taken over by Philo; and by him brought into relation with the transcendent GOD of later Judaism. Philo could, and did very extensively, quote Scripture to enforce his theory: 'By the word of the Lord were the heavens made' (Ps. xxxiii, 6) and so on. To ask whether the Logos is conceived of as personal or impersonal is to ask a question which admits of no precise answer because the whole modern conception of personality is a later developement.[1] It stands, at all events, for GOD: not for GOD-transcendent, dwelling-in-light-unapproachable, GOD, whom no man hath seen nor can see (1 Tim. vi, 16), but for GOD-immanent, GOD-active, GOD shaping the world according to His purpose.

From what has already been said it is clear that St Paul and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews are moving in the direction of this conception of the Logos in their attempt to interpret the person of Christ. But it was reserved for St John to take the final step[2] (Jn. i, 1–18).

St John goes back to the beginning. The world we know has its origin in a plan and purpose of which the existing order is the outcome, but as yet only a partial expression. All things come into being in accordance with this purpose,

[1] A developement due largely to reflexion by Christians on their spiritual experience.

[2] On the authorship and composition of the Fourth Gospel see Note 2 at the end of the chapter.

and apart from it was not anything made that has been made. 'It is this purpose that gives life to the whole, and is the light in what otherwise would be darkness. Darkness still broods among men wherever this purpose-light of things is not discerned, and their life is not true life unless its trend is to the furthering of the ordering process: knowing the design and helping to fashion things after it. Every man that is born into the world has within him as his own a germ of the life and a glimmering of the light'.[1] There is no man without this factor of human nature. In the case of some the germ did not grow and the light did not lead: but others became conscious of the purpose and followed the light and lived the life: the saints of the Old Testament for example.

And now in Jesus this purpose was realized, or as St John puts it 'enfleshed', embodied. 'The design was seen in its plenitude, full of grace and truth—commending itself by its own appeal to men as the truth about themselves—in a human life of quality and achievement unattained till then.'[2] The process had been all along one of divine ordering: and it had produced, not a stranger from another world, but Jesus, among His own, exhibiting to them in Himself reality, what their life was and meant.

And so St John turns again to the stories of the life of

[1] Cf. Prov. xx, 27: 'The Spirit of man is the candle of the Lord'—*lit by God, lighting to God*, said Benjamin Whichcote, the Cambridge Platonist.

[2] I am following the exposition of the Prologue of St John given in a sermon before the University of Cambridge on May 1st, 1927, by Professor J. F. Bethune-Baker.

Jesus in the light of his new knowledge as to who He really was. He chooses the most revealing of them and paints them again that we may see their meaning, this key now being in our hand. And what we see is not merely a human life in the here-and-now of space and time. We see what true life is, Eternal life, into which we too can enter even in the here-and-now, by sharing His spirit and adopting His attitude to life's business.

'The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever' (1 Jn. ii, 17).

NOTE 1. *On the developement of the doctrine of the Spirit*

The term *spirit* was originally as we have seen (Chapter IV), both in Hebrew and in Greek, a term denoting a subtle air-like substance in motion. It gradually lost its material connotation; but Philo did not use the word as we might have expected. That was very likely because it still retained too many materialistic associations. By the first century of our era, however, it had come to denote a kind of energy or force or vital power, and especially 'the vital power which belongs to the Divine Being and is seen to be operative in the world and in man'.[1]

The early Christians attributed the wonderful experience which came to them in the Christian fellowship to the activity of that force, that mighty influence 'belonging to God and proceeding from God'.[2]

St Paul recognizes in human beings a spirit[3] which

[1] H. B. Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament*, p. 2. (Macmillan.) [2] Acts ii, cf. Rom. v, 5; 1 Cor. xii, 13.
[3] 1 Thes. v, 23; 1 Cor. v, 5.

manifests itself in mind and conscience (Rom. ii, 15, vii, 25), akin to and receptive of the Spirit of GOD. Indeed in 1 Cor. ii, 11 he argues from the human to the divine personality and says that there is in GOD a region of inner personal consciousness corresponding to spirit in man. GOD's Spirit quickens man's spirit and only so is man's spirit regnant in him in such a way that he deserves to be called spiritual.[1]

Now St Paul maintained the equivalence of the Spirit of GOD with the Spirit of Christ and even with the Spiritual Christ Himself. 'This led to a transference to the Spirit of the character, qualities, and purposes which had been seen in Jesus.'[2] So 'St Paul conceived of a Being, immaterial, universally extended, immanent in human experience and characterized by those qualities of self-consciousness, purpose, and self-direction which we sum up as constituting personality';[3] although, strictly speaking, as we have already observed, the whole modern conception of personality is a later developement.

In St John the doctrine of the Spirit is carried very little further than this. As the Logos in the beginning was with GOD and proceeding from GOD became incarnate, so when the incarnate Logos is glorified (Jn. vii, 39, xvi, 7), there comes the Spirit, the Paraclete, and in the coming of the Paraclete Christ Himself comes (Jn. xiv, 16–18). And this is the coming that matters, and the idea of a spectacular return on the clouds of heaven falls into the background.

[1] See G. G. Findlay on 1 Cor. ii (Expositor's Greek Testament).

[2] C. A. Scott, *op. cit.* p. 258.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 144.

Thus, already in the New Testament we find the elements out of which theologians have built up the doctrine of the Trinity. That doctrine as ordinarily taught needs revision. But this is a large subject which obviously cannot be entered into here. For suggestions with regard to it I would refer to such a work as Dr Wheeler Robinson's *The Christian Experience of the Holy Spirit*.[1]

NOTE 2. *On the authorship and composition of the Fourth Gospel*

The purpose of the writer of the Fourth Gospel is to deepen the spiritual experience[2] of the second generation of Christians by bringing out for them the inner meaning of the story of Jesus. 'These things are written...that believing ye may have life in his name' (xx, 31). 'He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgement, but hath passed out of death into life' (v, 24). 'This is life eternal, that they should know thee, the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ' (xvii, 3).

Upon that story[3] the Fourth Evangelist pondered often and long in the light of his own convictions and devotional

[1] Note especially Chapter XII (and the suggestion on p. 281).

[2] In illustration of this Note 3 is added on the Eucharist in the Fourth Gospel.

[3] As he had received it, partly from the Synoptic Gospels Mark and Luke (there is no sufficient evidence that he used Matthew), and partly from traditions handed down in Asia Minor as coming from the Beloved Disciple whom he may have known personally, whom, at all events, he felt to be his guide and master.

experiences. And there are many indications, as the late Baron von Hügel has pointed out, that he was a mystic. He heard with the prophet's inward ear: very likely he saw in mystic vision.

> What first were guessed as points, I now knew stars,
> And named them in the Gospel I have writ.[1]

The appendix to the Gospel identifies the author as the 'disciple whom Jesus loved' (xxi, 24). But this is a later insertion, and the statement would be sufficiently accounted for if we supposed that the Gospel was written by a disciple who had 'come to conceive a mystical veneration for the aged Apostle who had leaned on the Lord's breast at the Last Supper'.[2] This Apostle can hardly be any other than John the son of Zebedee.

It is a tempting suggestion that John the son of Zebedee is the author of the Apocalypse: that his reverent and admiring disciple is the other John named by Papias, John the Elder: and that John the Elder is the author not only of the Gospel but also of the three Epistles that bear the name of John.[3] And it is interesting to note that this is actually the hypothesis adopted and defended in the most recent commentary on the Gospel, that of the late Dr Bernard published posthumously (1928).

[1] Browning, *A Death in the Desert*.

[2] Streeter, *The Four Gospels*, p. 433. (Macmillan.)

[3] Note that the author of 2 Jn. speaks of himself as 'the elder'; and so does the author of 3 Jn.

NOTE 3. *On the Eucharist in the Fourth Gospel.*

St John does not feel it necessary to repeat the account of the Institution of the Lord's Supper already given in Mark; but it is clear that in Chapter VI he has the Christian rite in mind. Indeed he seems to have in view the attitude towards the Eucharistic bread represented in Ignatius' *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans*:[1] 'the Eucharist is the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which flesh suffered for our sins, which also the Father of his goodness raised up'. Christians in the circle known to Ignatius had evidently gone considerably beyond St Paul in identifying the bread itself in some mysterious way with the flesh of Christ.

Read carefully and as a whole, Jn. vi certainly suggests that to the writer feeding upon Christ is a bigger and wider thing than merely the receiving of the Eucharistic bread and wine. The connexion of thought may be traced as follows. First comes the story of the feeding of a multitude with loaves and fishes after the Lord 'had given thanks'[2] (1–14). This suggests the subject of the discourse which begins *v.* 26, leading up to 'My Father giveth you the true bread out of heaven' (*v.* 32)...'I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst' (*v.* 35)—not he that 'eateth' but 'he that cometh', 'he that believeth', strongly suggesting that in the writer's view coming and believing were what

[1] Chapter VI—written (*c.* A.D. 115) possibly about the same time as the Gospel, certainly not more than twenty years or so later.

[2] Εὐχαριστήσας, V, 11; cf. V, 23.

was meant by the figure of eating.[1] Similarly 'beholding' and 'believing' are stressed in *v.* 40 and associated with the gift of 'eternal life'. Language like that of Ignatius is not used till we reach *v.* 51: 'I am the living bread which came down out of heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: yea and the bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world'—the same promise of eternal life being here attached to 'eating the bread'. The Jews object (*v.* 52): but 'Ignatian' phraseology is only repeated and emphasized (*vv.* 53–58); until, indeed, the disciples murmur, 'This is a hard saying; who can hear it?' (*v.* 60). The answer to them is 'Doth this cause you to stumble? What then if ye should behold the Son of man ascending where he was before?' (*vv.* 61, 62). In other words, 'you must be prepared for things hard to understand': and then immediately the Lord adds 'It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words[2] that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life. But there are some of you that believe not' (*vv.* 63, 64). Surely the meaning is 'you must not take all this about eating and drinking literally: the life-giving force is the spirit; and the sayings of the Word made flesh—they are spirit and they are life'.[3]

'Current language about the Eucharist is deliberately

[1] 'I am the bread of life' being figurative, just as 'I am the good shepherd', 'I am the light of the world', 'I am the door'.

[2] Origen noted the thought here expressed (Hom. in Num. xvi; Migne, *P.G.* XII, p. 701): 'We are said to drink the blood of Christ, not only in the use of the Sacraments, but also when we receive his words'.

[3] Professor J. M. Creed, 'Sacraments in the Fourth Gospel' in the *Modern Churchman*, Oct. 1926, p. 368.

accepted.[1] The Evangelist is anxious to justify and explain the sacramental rites of the Church. But he wishes to carry his readers beyond the rite to the inward and personal union with Christ which the rite at once symbolizes and mediates.'

'We are left with the positive affirmation that the flesh and blood of the Son of Man give life, and explanation that the life comes, not from the flesh in itself, but from the Spirit of the exalted Son of Man.'[2]

[1] In justice to Ignatius it must be added that he probably did not intend that his language should be tied down to its literal meaning. Elsewhere he speaks of the Gospel as 'the flesh of Jesus' (Philad. v), faith 'as the flesh of Christ' (Trall, VIII), and love as His blood (Rom. vii).

[2] J. M. Creed, *ibid.* p. 369. Professor Creed adds: 'We seem to find a similar attitude towards the sacrament of Baptism in the discourse with Nicodemus. There is the same unqualified statement of the Church's faith: "Amen, Amen, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God". But the words which follow dwell upon the unseen operations of the Spirit'. The reference to the water is quietly dropped. Professor Creed's essay is recommended for further study.

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